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Heavy rain brings Delhi to its knees

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After Jio, Airtel hikes phone tariffs by 10-21 pc

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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڈھ روزنامہ بنگلور

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Just 20% water available in 150 Indian reservoirs

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

Water available in the 150 main reservoirs across the country has dipped to just 20 per cent of their total live storage capacity which is 36.368 billion cubic meters (bcm), according to the Central Water Commission (CWC). For the past two weeks, the reservoirs were at 21 per cent of their total live storage capacity. The northern region, comprising Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, and Rajasthan, has a total live storage capacity of 19.663 BCM in 10 reservoirs. Currently, the storage level there is 5.239 bcm or 27 per cent of the capacity. The eastern regions Assam, Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal, Tripura, Nagaland, and Bihar has a total live storage capacity of 20.430 bcm in 23 reservoirs.

—Salar News

India dubs US' report on religious freedom as biased

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

Responding to the US State Department's report on religious freedom, India said that it is a "deeply biased". Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal told reporters that the report also lacks an understanding of India's social fabric, and selectively picked incidents to advance a preconceived narrative as well. The report on India, released on Wednesday, alleged violent attacks on minority groups in India. It cited violence in Manipur and highlighted that 253 churches were burnt in Manipur.

—Agencies

Would be an honour to be part of Trump govt: Ramaswamy

ATLANTA, 28 JUNE

Indian-American millionaire entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy, who was once a rival of former president Donald Trump, has said though he has not been asked, he would be "honoured" to serve in the Trump administration as his running mate. Ramaswamy, however, made it clear that he was not approached. Ramaswamy, 38, dropped out of the 2024 Republican Party presidential race in January after a disappointing showing in the Iowa caucuses and endorsed Trump. Previously, some US media reported that Ramaswamy could be among the frontrunners. "He has not asked me to be his Vice President, whoever he asks is going to have a remarkable ability to serve this country"he added *—AP*

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1 dies as Delhi airport roof collapses amid heavy rains

Flights cancelled as Delhi sees highest rainfall in 88 years

The roof and support beams collapsed on four parked cars at Delhi airport's Terminal 1 on Friday, killing 1 cab driver *PHOTO: PTI*

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

A cab driver died and six people were injured after a portion of a canopy at Delhi airport's Terminal-1 collapsed on cars amid heavy rain on Friday, leading to suspension of flight departures, according to officials.

Delhi Fire Services (DFS) officials said three fire tenders were rushed to Terminal-1 (T1) of the airport after a call about the incident was received around 5:30 am.

Besides the roof sheet, the support beams collapsed, damaging the cars parked in the pick-up and drop area of the terminal. A search operation was conducted to make sure no one was trapped inside the damaged vehicles, they said.

The injured have been admitted to Medanta Hospital near the airport. One of them was rescued from a car on which an iron beam had fallen.

Four vehicles were damaged.

The Civil Aviation Ministry said flight operations at T1 have been suspended till further notice.

T1 has only domestic flight operations by IndiGo and SpiceJet. The airport -- which has three terminals T1, T2 and T3 -- handles around 1,400 flight movements daily.

Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu Kinjarapu has announced a compensation of Rs 3,00,000 for the injured. Authorities at the Delhi International Airport Limited said a technical committee had been formed to investigate the cause of the accident. Meanwhile, Delhi government has set up a 24-hour control room to monitor the waterlogging situation in the national capital, Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj announced on Friday after the city was lashed by heavy rains, the highest in a single day of June in 88 years. A cab driver who was at the site of the incident, said that there was no loud noise of anything breaking when the rods of a the roof collapsed. Krishna Kumar said that chaos ensued after the roof collapsed with people shouting for help.

—PTI

>>>More on Page 4

Modi inaugurated T1 Terminal in March

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the renovated Delhi airport's Terminal 1 on 10 March, expanding it from 60,000 sq mts to 169,000 sq mts. Terminal 1 was built to 40 million passengers per year at a at a cost of Rs 12,000 crore. Civil Aviation Minister Mohan Naidu Kinjarapu said the portion that collapsed was not part of the renovated section.

FLYERS IN LIMBO AS 18 BENGALURU FLIGHTS HIT

BENGALURU, 28 JUNE

The roof collapse at Delhi Airport's Terminal 1 on Friday led to 18 flights between Delhi and Bengaluru being cancelled. Nine incoming and nine outgoing IndiGo flights were affected, causing significant disruptions for passengers.

In response, IndiGo has advised passengers to contact their customer service at 0124 6173838 or 0124 4973838 for assistance with their travel plans. *—Salar News*

KIN TO GET RS 2L

13 dead, 4 hurt as van & lorry collide in Haveri

HAVERI, 28 JUNE

As many as 13 people, including two children died and four others were injured after the van they were travelling in allegedly collided with a lorry at Gundenahalli cross in Byadagi Taluk early on Friday, police said.

The deceased children, both boys, were aged four and six, they said.

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has announced a compensation of Rs 2 lakh each to the kin of those who died in the accident. According to police, the accident occurred around 3.45am when the van collided with a lorry which was parked on the side of National Highway 48 in Byadagi in Haveri district.

A total of 17 people were travelling in the van. Of them, eleven people died on the spot while two others were declared dead at a hospital, a senior police official said. Among the four injured, two are admitted in the ICU of the hospital, he said.

The deceased have been identified as Nagesh,50, Vishalakshi,40, Adarsh,23, Parashuram,45, Bhagya,40, Punya,50, Manasa,24, Roopa,40, Subhadra Bai,65, Manjula Bai,62 and Manjula,50, police said.

Names of the deceased children have not been shared by the police.

"The victims were coming from Chincholi Mayamma Devasthana and heading to their native Yemehatti village in Shivamogga district. The lorry was standing on the side of the highway. The van hit the lorry from behind," Anshu Kumar Srivastava, Superintendent of Police (Haveri) told PTI.

Police suspected that the driver dozed off resulting in the accident. *—PTI*

The van collided with a lorry, which was parked on the side of National Highway 48 in Byadagi *PHOTO: PTI*

137 Indians held in Lanka for cybercrime frauds

COLOMBO, 28 JUNE

As many as 137 Indian nationals who were allegedly involved in a large-scale online financial scam across multiple locations in Sri Lanka were arrested by police on Thursday from the Colombo suburbs of Madiwela and Battaramulla and the western coastal town of Negombo, according to a media report on Friday.

Police Spokesman SSP Nihal Thalduwa said the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) conducted simultaneous raids in these areas, leading to the seizure of 158 mobile phones, 16 laptops, and 60 desktop computers.

In Negombo, 55 suspects were detained along with 55 mobile phones and 29 laptops.

Similarly, in Kochchikade, authorities apprehended 53 individuals and confiscated 31 laptops and 58 mobile phones.

The operation in Madiwela led to the arrest of 13 suspects and recovery of eight laptops and 38 mobile phones, while in Thalangama, 16 suspects were taken into custody with eight laptops and 38 mobile phones.

The SSP also said that all the arrested suspects were males.

The crackdown follows a complaint from a victim who was lured into a WhatsApp group promising cash for social media interactions.

—PTI

- Police Spokesman SSP Nihal Thalduwa said the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) conducted simultaneous raids in these areas, leading to the seizure of 158 mobile phones, 16 laptops, and 60 desktop computers.

BSY PAID MONEY TO SILENCE RAPE VICTIM, SAYS CID

BENGALURU, 28 JUNE

CID probing charges against former chief minister BS Yediyurappa of sexually assaulting a minor girl has alleged in the chargesheet that he and three other accused paid money to the alleged victim and her mother to buy their silence.High Court extended its interim order restraining CID from arresting him. The other three co-accused are Arun YM, Rudresh M and G Mariswamy who are aides of Yediyurappa.

Yediyurappa is charged under Section 8 (punishment for sexual assault) of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act and Sections 354A (sexual harassment), 204 (destruction of document or electronic record and 214 (offering gift or restoration of property) *—PTI*

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Soren gets bail after 5 months in jail

RANCHI, 28 JUNE

Jharkhand High Court on Friday granted bail to former chief minister Hemant Soren in a money laundering case linked to a land scam.

The High Court had on 13 June reserved its order on Soren's bail plea.

"Bail has been granted to Soren. The court has held that prima facie he is not guilty of the offence and there is no likelihood of the petitioner committing an offence when on bail," Soren's senior counsel Arunabh Chowdhury told PTI. Soren, the executive president of JMM), was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate on 31 January in in money laundering case. *—PTI*

Ex-Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren *PHOTO: PTI*

> **I was falsely implicated. A conspiracy was hatched against me and I was forced to spend five months in jail** -Hemant Soren, ex-CM

'WANT ACCOUNTABILITY'

Parl adjourned amid uproar over NEET

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

Opposition caused repeated disruptions in Parliament on Friday over NEET paper leak issue, with both Houses being adjourned for the day without transacting much business. However, Rajya Sabha took up the Motion of Thanks for the President's address amid protests. BJD, which almost always supported the BJP in the previous Lok Sabha tto joined in on the protest.

At one point, Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha and Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge too entered the Well of the House to join the Opposition protest.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju told Opposition that they can discuss the matter during the course of the debate on the Motion of Thanks to the President's address.

Birla said there are certain norms of Parliament that have to be followed and committees have to be formed, to which Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi said students are not aware of it. They are only demanding justice. *—PTI*

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PHOTO: PTI

RaGa's mic muted in Parl

Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi's microphone was turned off in the Lower House. In a viral video, the Congress MP and Speaker Om Birla were seen going back and forth over it and Rahul and asks the Speaker to switch it on. Rahul demanded a discussion on the NEET issue, to which Birla allegedly objected and turned his mic off.

CM MEETS SHAH, GADKARI OVER PENDING PROJECTS

NEW DELHI, 28JUNE

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah met Union Home Minister Amit Shah to seek approval for various proposals aimed at strengthening Karnataka's police force on Friday.

Under the Nirbhaya Fund, Siddaramaiah proposed the Safe City similar to Bengaluru initiative. The project is estimated to cost around Rs 1,000 crore. CM requested for 100 new police station costing Rs 300 crore.

Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar also met Union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari over pending State infrastructure projects, in New Delhi.

He also demanded Rs 330 crore under the 15th Finance Commission to the fire and emergency service department.

State demands GIFT City

Ahead of the Union Budget, State IT&BT Minister Priyank Kharge wrote to Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and made a strong pitch for establishing a Central Business District that will act as a global financial and IT hub- modelled on the lines of Gujarat's GIFT City, on Friday. *—Salar News*

AFTER VOKKALIGAS

Lingayat seer pitches for CM, DyCM

CHIKKODI, 28 JUNE

A day after a Vokkaliga seer publicly urged Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to step down and make way for his deputy DK Shivakumar, a prominent Veerashaiva-Lingayat pontiff on Friday urged that ministers from his community should be considered in case there is a change in chief minister post.

Sri Saila Mutt's Channa Siddharama Panditaradhya Shivacharya Swamiji also pitched for Veerashaiva-Lingayat ministers to be considered in case additional deputy chief minister posts are created. He pointed out that the Lingayat votes were decisive for Congress to form a government.

Speaking to reporters here, he said, "Ministers such as Eshwar Khandre, MB Patil, SS Mallikarjun and Shamanur Shivashankarappa should be considered, and their experience should be utilised." Vishwa Vokkaliga Mahasamastana Mutt seer Kumara Chandrashekar anatha Swamiji on Thursday raised the pitch for Shivakumar as chief minister at Kempegowda Jayanthi here in the presence of both Siddaramaiah and the deputy chief minister on the dais. Deputy Chief Minister Shivakumar, who is also the State Congress President, is a Vokkaliga -- a dominant community in the southern parts of the State. *—Salar News*

There is reportedly stiff competition between CM Siddaramaiah and DyCM Shivakumar for the chief minister's post *PHOTO: PTI*

CONG GOVT WILL FALL: R ASHOKA

Leader of Opposition in Assembly R Ashoka on Friday claimed that the Congress government in State will collapse due to divisions among ministers over the chief minister and deputy chief minister posts. Ashoka insinuated that Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar played a role in a Vokkaliga seer's statement over the chief minister's post. He alleged that Shivakumar will soon topple the government.

Woman electrocuted in Dakshina Kannada

MANGALURU, 28 JUNE

A 21-year-old woman was allegedly electrocuted in a village in Belthangady in Dakshina Kannada district, police said on Friday. The deceased Pratiksha Shetty, they said, adding the incident happened in Shibaje village in the Dharmasthala police limits on Thursday. According to police, the woman had stepped out of her house to collect a parcel when she was electrocuted. Pratiksha's father, who was with her, tried to save her but sustained injuries in the process. She was a resident of Bargula hamlet in Shibaje village, a police official said. This is the second incident of electrocution this week. Earlier, two autorickshaw drivers had come into contact with a live cable in Pandeshwar in Mangaluru city on Tuesday and died. *—PTI*

Electric crematorium set up for Army in City

BENGALURU, 28 JUNE

A foundation was laid for the new electric crematorium project dedicated to Army veterans, serving personnel, and their families in Bengaluru. The project aims to provide respectful and dignified last rites for armed forces personnel while easing the burden on existing public crematoriums. Major General Ravi Murugan, General Officer Commanding Karnataka and Kerala Sub Area, officiated at the ceremony held on Friday. The crematorium will be constructed on defence land in the City. "It serves as a fitting tribute to their contributions to the nation and reaffirms our commitment to honouring the memory and service of our armed forces personnel," Murugan said. *—Salar News*

Udupi Shipyard bags ₹1.1K cr order from Norwegian firm

UDUPI, 28 JUNE

Udupi Cochin Shipyard Limited (UCSL), a wholly owned subsidiary of the Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL), has bagged a Rs 1,100 crore-worth international order for eight 6,300 TDW dry cargo vessels. CSL said it has won an international order from Wilson ASA, Norway, for the design and construction of four 6,300 TDW dry cargo vessels. CSL said the new order was a continuation of the contract awarded in June 2023 for the design and construction of six 3800 TDW dry cargo vessels, which are now at advanced levels of construction at the yard at Udupi in Karnataka. "The vessel is of 100 meters length and has a deadweight of 6300 metric tonnes at a design draft of 6.5m. The vessels shall be designed by Conoship International, Netherlands, and shall be constructed as an environment-friendly diesel-electric vessel for the transport of general cargo in the coastal waters of Europe," CSL said. *—PTI*

Bharat Electronics receives order worth ₹3,172 cr

BENGALURU, 28 JUNE

Navratna Defence Public Sector Undertaking, Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) has signed a contract valued at Rs 3,172 crore with Armoured Vehicles Nigam Limited (AVNL) on Friday at AVNL Headquarters in Chennai. According to an official statement, BEL, which is headquartered in Bengaluru, stated the project entails the supply and installation of an advanced, indigenously designed and developed Sighting and Fire Control System (FCS) for the upgrade of BMP 2/2K tanks of the Indian Army, along with a comprehensive engineering support package. "Additionally, BEL has secured other orders valued at Rs 481 crore following the last disclosure on May 22, 2024 which comprises doppler weather radar, classroom jammers, spares and services etc. With these, BEL has received accumulated orders totaling Rs 4,803 crore in the current financial year," it stated. *—PTI*

CID: BSY's aide forced rape victim's mom to delete video

Special public prosecutor has sought time to file objections

BENGALURU, 28 JUNE

CID filed a chargesheet at the Fast Track Court 1 against Yediyurappa and three of his aides in connection with the POCSO case.

On Friday, HC bench of Justice Krishna S Dixit continued its 14 June order, as it permitted the prosecution to file its objection to the petition filed by Yediyurappa seeking quashing of the case against him.

Special Public Prosecutor sought time to file objections, and maintained that Yediyurappa's petition may not survive as a chargesheet has already been filed.

The court said, "Call these matters week after next at request of learned Special Public Prosecutor for filing statement of objections if any. Interim order granted earlier to continue till next date of hearing."

According to the chargesheet, on 2 February, the 17-year-old alleged victim, along with her 54-year-old mother visited Yediyurappa at his residence in Dollar's Colony seeking help in getting justice in a previous case of sexual assault.

Yediyurappa called the minor inside a meeting room and locked the door. He then asked the victim whether she remembered the face of the person who had sexually assaulted her earlier to which the victim replied twice stating that she did.

After this, Yediyurappa asked her what her age was when she was allegedly sexually assaulted previously, to which she replied six-and-half years, according to the chargesheet. At this point, Yediyurappa allegedly tried to sexually assault her.

Former chief minister BS Yediyurappa *PHOTO: PTI*

- According to the chargesheet, on 2 February, the 17-year-old alleged victim, along with her 54-year-old mother visited Yediyurappa at his residence in Dollar's Colony seeking help in getting justice in a previous case of sexual assault

The horrified victim pushed Yediyurappa's hand, moved away and asked him to open the door. Yediyurappa then opened the door and exited after putting some cash in the hands of the victim from his pocket. He then told the victim's mother that he couldn't help them in the case and also gave her some money from his pocket and sent them away.

After the victim's mother uploaded a video related to the incident on her Facebook account, on 20 February, at the behest of Yediyurappa, the other accused, went to their house and brought them to his residence, it said.

Arun then ensured that the victim's mother deleted the video from her Facebook account and her iPhone's gallery. On Yediyurappa's directions, Rudresh is said to have paid them Rs two lakh in cash.

A Bengaluru court on 13 June issued a non-bailable arrest warrant against Yediyurappa in the case registered against him on 14 March. High Court on 14 June restrained the CID from arresting Yediyurappa.

The victim's mother, who had leveled the charge against Yediyurappa, died at a private hospital last month, due to lung cancer. *—PTI*

Vijayendra and BJP leaders detained amid Valmiki protest

BENGALURU, 28 JUNE

BY Vijayendra *PHOTO: PTI*

BJP State Unit President BY Vijayendra and hundreds of party workers were detained on Friday in Chitradurga following a protest condemning the alleged fund mismanagement in the Valmiki Corporation scam.

BJP accused the ruling Congress government of being involved in the fraud of Rs 89.63 crore, demanding Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's resignation. The protestors attempted to lay siege to the District Commissioner (DC) offices across the State. The protest, which began at Onake Obavva Circle, escalated as hundreds of activists expressed their outrage against the government. The tribal welfare scam emerged after the illegal transfer of government funds to illegal accounts to use for Hyderabad and Telangana during the Lok Sabha elections.

Speaking to the reporters, Vijayendra said, "BJP will continue with the agitations and Minister Nagendra's resignation is not just enough. Also, Siddaramaiah is trying to put the blame on another officer to close the case as soon as possible. Meanwhile, the government is increasing the prices of petrol, diesel, and milk putting people in misery."

Criticising Siddaramaiah's tenure, he alleged internal politics within the Congress party, highlighting the demand by Congress leaders for more deputy chief minister posts.

Vijayendra said, "Before the election, Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar displayed unity, but now they are at odds. There is a probability of street fights in the state. We have to wait and see how things unfold."

He accused the Congress leadership of neglecting public issues, stating, "The ministers are downplaying inflation, and public trust in the Congress government is diminishing."

Additionally, BJP farmers' morcha has announced to protest on Saturday over the recent milk price hike. *—Salar News*

ART BAZAR

A visitor checks out a plant stand at a stall during the inauguration of Artisan Bazaar Art and Craft mela at Chitrakala Parishath in Bengaluru on Friday *PHOTO: SALAR*

HC refuses to stall probe against Preetham Gowda

BENGALURU, 28 JUNE

The Karnataka High Court on Friday refused to stall the investigation against former Hassan BJP MLA Preetham Gowda, who is accused of distributing explicit videos of sexual assault allegedly involving former JD(S) MP Prajwal Revanna.

Gowda had filed a petition seeking to quash the FIR registered against him under Section 67, 66E of the Information Technology Act and Sections 354A (sexual harassment), 354D (stalking), 354B (assault or use of criminal force to woman with intent to disrobe) and 506 (criminal intimidation) of Indian Penal Code.

A single judge bench of Justice Krishna S Dixit passed the interim order while issuing notice to the respondents.

However, the court said that Gowda should not be arrested or detained as long as he cooperates with the investigation.

It also said this order shall not come in the way of any material discovered by the police.

- The cases of sexual abuse came to light after explicit videos allegedly involving Prajwal were circulated

Gowda, who lost the Assembly polls in May last year, was named as an accused in the fourth FIR registered against Prajwal Revanna by a woman.

Four separate cases have been registered against Prajwal Revanna, the grandson of the former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda, all of which are being investigated by the Special Investigation Team (SIT).

The cases of sexual abuse came to light after pen-drives containing explicit videos allegedly involving Prajwal Revanna were reportedly circulated in Hassan, ahead of Lok Sabha polls there on 26 April. *—Salar News*

Deve Gowda backs Centre over CBI probe in NEET case

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

Amid an uproar in Rajya Sabha over National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) issue, senior JD(S) leader HD Deve Gowda on Friday appealed to the Opposition to let the House function smoothly. He said the government cannot fix responsibility until the probe in the matter is completed.

Rajya Sabha witnessed chaotic scenes as Opposition members demanding a discussion on the alleged irregularities in the conduct of the NEET raised slogans and entered the Well of the House during the discussion on the Motion of Thanks on the President's address.

HD Deve Gowda *PHOTO: PTI*

Intervening during the discussion, Gowda said lakhs of students have been affected because of the alleged irregularities in the conduct of the medical entrance exam.

"I do not want to take sides. The government has taken the right decision (to order a CBI probe)," the former prime minister said.

He urged the Opposition to let the House function smoothly. However, the protesting members did not relent.

BJP leader Sudhanshu Trivedi, who initiated the discussion on the Motion of Thanks, said it was unfortunate that the Opposition was continuing with its protests and sloganeering despite an appeal for order by a senior member like Gowda.

The JD(S) is part of the NDA and Gowda's son HD Kumaraswamy is the Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises minister. *—PTI*

IMD warns fishermen against high waves

BENGALURU, 28 JUNE

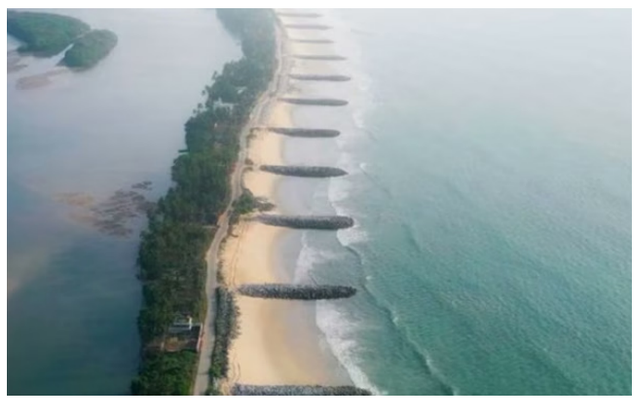
Owing to heavy rains in the coastal regions, India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued warning for fishermen till 29 June.

Stating that squally weather with wind speed of 35 kmph to 45 kmph, gusting to 55 kmph, is likely to prevail till Saturday, IMD reiterated its warning to fishermen, asking them not to enter the sea.

It has also issued high wave alerts for the coast of Dakshina Kannada (Mulki to Mangaluru) Udupi (Baindur to Kapu) and Uttara Kannada (Majali to Bhatkal). With high waves in the range of 2.9 m to 3.7m, the Met centre advised caution while doing marine operations and near-shore recreations.

Stating that waterlogging and flooding of low-lying areas as well as mudslides and rock falls are possible, it has warned people to avoid areas prone to flash floods and be prepared for power outages and traffic disruptions.

According to its report, City is likely to receive very light rain, with temperatures varying from 26.4 degrees Celsius to 21.3 degrees Celsius tomorrow.



A squally weather with wind speed of 35 kmph to 45 kmph, gusting to 55 kmph, is likely to prevail till Saturday *PHOTO: X*

Agumbe has received the highest rainfall at 81.5 mm on 27 June and Bengaluru the lowest at 0.1mm.

Meanwhile, Bengaluru's water expert and one of the founders of Biome Trust, S Vishwanath, who tracks the reservoir inflow on 'X' has pointed out that there has been a good inflow in Kaveri basin.

As per Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre, as on 28 June, water inflow to Kabini stands at 20,113 cusecs.

Another 'X' user, who too tracks weather in the state through his handle Namma Karnataka Weather (@namma_vjy) has pointed out that the water level has started receding in Bhagamandala Triveni Sangama. *—PTI*

Rajesh Lilothia *PHOTO: PTI*

100-DAY CAMPAIGN FOR PROTECTING CONSTITUTION

BENGALURU, 28 JUNE

All India Congress Committee (AICC) SC division announced on Friday that a 100-day campaign for Constitution protection will be conducted in 3,000 villages starting from 25 November.

Under this initiative, a man and a woman in each village will be recognised as guardians of the Constitution. Additionally, each village will organize gram sabhas where the Preamble will be read.

Speaking to reporters on Friday, All India Congress Committee SC Division President Rajesh Lilothia said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is trying to strip away the rights of Dalits, tribals, and minorities.

He added that the slogans 'Jai Bheem" and "Jai Constitution," will ignite a new vigour in the country.

Lilothia said that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi taking his Lok Sabha oath with a copy of the Constitution was a powerful message to the nation.

He accused RSS and BJP of attempting to replace the Constitution with Manusmriti.

AICC SC/ST and Minority Division Coordinator K Raju urged SC, ST, and minority leaders to keep the issue of the Constitution alive and build narratives around it. He stressed that BJP cannot be trusted. Raju also pointed out that 37 of the 99 Congress MPs elected belong to SC and ST communities. *—Salar News*

IN BENGALURU

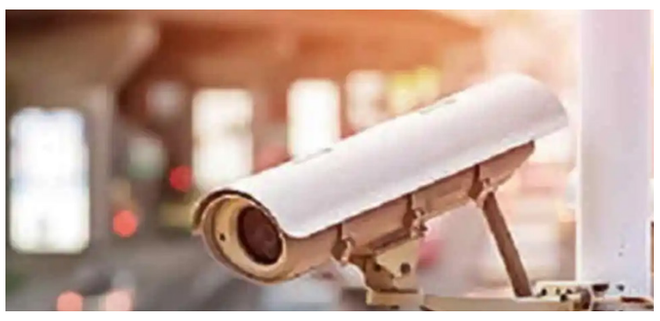
AI cams detect 3L more traffic violations

BENGALURU, 28 JUNE

Bengaluru traffic police saw traffic violations increase by 3.3 lakh in the first six months this year as compared to the same time last year. Speaking to **Salar News**, Joint Commissioner of Traffic, Bengaluru City Police, MN Anucheth said introducing Artificial intelligence (AI) cameras has helped crack the violations. The City has recorded 39 lakh traffic violations this year.

"We have used AI cameras in 50 locations around the City to enforce traffic rules," he said.

The 50 junctions include JP Nagar 35th main road 15 cross junction, Jayanagar 4th block, near Jayanagar bus stop, Koramangala Wipro park junction, RT Nagar Taralabalu junction.



As of now, there are a total of 330 cameras in 50 locations in Bengaluru *PHOTO: @CPBLR/ TWITTER SCREEN GRAB*

As of now, there are a total of 330 cameras in these 50 locations which are capable of detecting seven types of traffic violations including, driving without a helmet, driving without a seat belt, and jumping traffic signals.

According to the data, the most frequently committed traffic violation this year is riding without a helmet in which 16.7 lakh cases were registered. The least traffic violation is zig-zag driving with 33 violators booked. In 2023, around 17.52 lakh people were caught for riding without helmets and only 29 cases of zig-zag driving.

- The 50 junctions include JP Nagar 35th main road 15 cross junction, Jayanagar 4th block, near Jayanagar bus stop, Koramangala Wipro park junction, RT Nagar Taralabalu junction

The number of pillion riders without helmets was 3.4 lakh last year which increased to 10.85 lakh this year. Wrong parking cases were 4.93 lakh last year which is 4.36 lakh this year. *—Salar News*

Special court summons BJP MLA Poonja, 64 others

BENGALURU, 28 JUNE

Harish Poonja *PHOTO: PTI*

A special court for public representatives in Bengaluru has summoned BJP MLA Harish Poonja along with 64 other party members.

The summons relates to allegations of obstructing police from doing their duties during protests against the arrest of Shashiraj Shetty, BJP Belthangady Taluk Yuva Morcha taluk president. Poonja and others will have to appear before the court on 10 July. Beltangady police have registered two separate cases. Summons have been issued for 28 individuals in the first case and 37 in the second case. Those involved are required to appear before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court on 10 July for a formal inquiry.

The first case accuses MLA Poonja and other BJP workers of attempting to pressure the police to release Shashiraj Shetty, who was detained on charges of illegal quarrying. The second case is linked to a protest held on 20 May outside an administrative building, opposing the FIR filed against Shetty.Following the filing of chargesheets by the Belthangady police, the court decided to issue summons on Thursday, marking the start of judicial proceedings scheduled for 10 July. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X/@AR JAFFER SADIQ

ED nabs DMK's Jaffer Sadiq in laundering case

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has arrested former DMK leader Jaffer Sadiq in a drug-related money laundering case. ED interrogated him in Tihar jail where he was lodged in an NDPS case. He was arrested on 26 June after interrogation. ED will seek his remand once he is produced in court. Earlier this month, the court had allowed ED to examine former DMK member Jaffer Sadiq in Tihar Jail. Delhi's Patiala House court had once again granted permission to the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to examine Jaffer Sadiq in Tihar Jail and record his statement under PMLA. The agency wanted to interrogate him about drug-related money laundering case. The court had directed the jail authorities to make necessary arrangements. *—PTI*

C'garh shops to now stay open 24x7 for 365 days

CHANDIGARH, 28 JUNE

The Chandigarh administration has allowed shops and commercial establishments registered with the labour department to now open round-the-clock, a move aimed to promote ease of doing business." The female employees will not be allowed to work after 8pm, but in case they are (willing) then their written consent in this regard shall be taken and adequate safety and security arrangements of such employees shall be made during working hours," according to a recent order issued by the administration here. According to an official statement, the move is to promote ease of doing business. It is also to simplify labour laws and regulations regarding opening and closing timings and operations on all days of a week. *—PTI*

Bhujbal fomenting communal tension, alleges Jarange

JALNA, 28 JUNE

Maratha reservation activist Manoj Jarange on Friday accused Maharashtra minister and OBC leader Chhagan Bhujbal of fomenting communal tension, and urged Chief Minister Eknath Shinde to rein him in. He was speaking to media persons at Mahakala village in Jalna district in the wake of sloganeering and stone-pelting in his native Matori village in neighbouring Beed district. The incident took place on Thursday night when some people from nearby villages were passing through Matori to take part in a rally of OBC quota agitators Laxman Hake and Navnath Waghmare. He claimed that Bhujbal had orchestrated the attack to wrongly blame the Maratha youths. *—PTI*

MEA plans to hold next India-Russia summit

NEW DELHI 28 JUNE

The preparations for the next India-Russia summit are underway, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Friday. "We have a very well established arrangement of bilateral summits with the Russian Federation. Twenty-one such meetings have happened so far," External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said. "We are preparing to hold the next summit," he said. Jaiswal's comments came days after a Kremlin official in Moscow said active preparations are underway for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Russia. "I can confirm that we are preparing a visit by the prime minister of India. We cannot (say) the dates as yet, because the dates are announced by the parties in agreement," Yuri Ushakov, an assistant to the Russian president, said. *—PTI*

MP faints in RS, Oppn slams govt for continuing session

Opposition walks out after Chair refused to adjourn House

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

Objecting to the Rajya Sabha continuing its proceedings after a member fainted in the House and was taken to the hospital, the Opposition MPs on Friday accused the government of showing a total lack of concern towards the member.

Opposition parties staged a walkout from the Rajya Sabha after the Chair refused to adjourn the House even as MP Phulo Devi Netam fainted and was taken to the hospital.

This came as the entire Opposition staged a protest in the Upper House demanding a debate on the NEET issue.

Netam, a Rajya Sabha member of the Congress from Chhattisgarh, fainted while the opposition leaders were protesting demanding an immediate discussion on the NEET issue.

According to the Rajya Sabha MPs, Netam's blood pressure had shot up to 214/140, which the doctor said was "stroke level". She was taken to the Ram Manohar Lohia hospital and admitted in the ICU.

Congress leader Renuka Chowdhury said that continuing the House in such a situation was against humanity.

"A member of the Parliament fainted, the Parliament doctor saw her blood pressure was at stroke level. Some MPs are going to the hospital to take care of her, but the House will go on proceeding... There is no value in the life of a person, a member of the Parliament, a woman," Chowdhury said.

"Are they disposable commodities? They can run the House as and when they like. Is this democracy? Humanity and social decency says if a member has fainted, the MPs should accompany them," she added.

DMK leader Tiruchi Siva said they were forced to walkout. Trinamool Congress MP Sagarika Ghose said there was total lack of concern from the government when the MP fainted. Jharkhand Mukti Morcha MP Mahua Majhi said that she accompanied Netam in the ambulance, adding she has been admitted to the ICU and is recovering.

Meanwhile, amid the ongoing row over comments by Samajwadi Party MP RK Chaudhary calling Sengol, a symbol of the monarchy, Cabinet Minister Sanjay Nishad hit out at SP leader and said that he should refrain from giving absurd statements. *—PTI*

MPs at the Lok Sabha during the fifth day of the 18th Lok Sabha session, at the Parliament in New Delhi on Friday *PHOTO: ANI*

Swearing-in row: TMC MLAs' sit-in-protest enters second day

Kolkata, 28 June

Two newly-elected Trinamool Congress MLAs sat on a dharna for the second consecutive day on Friday in front of BR Ambedkar's statue in West Bengal Assembly, as a stalemate over their demand to be administered oath in the House against Governor C V Ananda Bose's invite to do so in the Raj Bhavan continued. Baranagar MLA Sayantika Bandyopadhyay and Bhagabangola MLA Rayat Hossain Sarkar sat on a dharna in the assembly complex on Thursday. *—PTI*

Oasis School Principal Ahsanul Haque being taken for questioning by CBI officials in connection with the alleged NEET paper leak *PHOTO: PTI*

NEET row: School principal, vice-principal arrested in Hazaribagh

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

The CBI on Friday arrested the principal and vice principal of a school in Jharkhand's Hazaribagh in connection with the NEET-UG paper leak case, officials said.

Ehsanul Haque, the principal of Oasis School, was made the city coordinator of Hazaribagh for the medical entrance exam conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA) on 5 May, they said.

Vice Principal Imtiaz Alam was designated as the NTA's observer and the centre coordinator at the Oasis School, officials said, adding the CBI is also questioning five more people from the district in connection with the paper leak case.

The federal probe agency arrested Haque and Alam after detailed questioning, they said.

Both the accused came under scanner during a probe by the Bihar Police's Economic Offences Unit (EOU) which was investigating the case earlier. The team had found burnt question papers of NEET-UG during a raid at a hideout of the solver gang, officials said.

The agitation against alleged irregularities in NEET-UG, PG and UGC-NET continued on Friday, with protests by several student groups entering the third day of their indefinite strike here at Jantar Mantar. *—PTI*

₹10K FOR YOUTHS

Budget: M'rashtra to give women ₹1.5K per month

MUMBAI, 28 JUNE

A monthly allowance of Rs 1,500 to women in the 21 to 60 age group, three free LPG cylinders a year for households, farmer-friendly steps and a stipend of Rs 10,000 per month to youths for skill training were highlights of the Maharashtra government's budget for 2024-25 presented in the assembly on Friday, four months ahead of the state polls.

Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, who also holds the finance portfolio, presented a Rs 20,051 crore revenue deficit budget for the current fiscal. An outlay of Rs 1.92 lakh crore was proposed under the scheme expenditure in the annual plan 2024-25.

Presenting his first full budget as the finance minister in the Shiv Sena-BJP-NCP government, Pawar announced a financial assistance scheme for women, "Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana".

Under theis scheme, eligible women in the age group 21 to 60 years will get a monthly allowance of Rs 1,500 which is aimed at ensuring overall development and empowerment of women, including economic independence, self-reliance, health and nutrition.An amount of Rs 46,000 crore will be made available every year for this scheme, which will be implemented from July, Pawar announced.

Announcing another welfare measure 'Mukhyamantri Annapurna Yojana', the Deputy Chief Minister said there is a connection between fuel used for cooking and women's health. "It is our responsibility to provide clean fuel to reduce health issues for women. The use of LPG should be intensified as it is a safe fuel. This will provide three gas cylinders free per household a year," benefitting 52,16,412 families. He declared that a start-up scheme to help small women entrepreneurs, "Punyashlok Ahilyadevi Holkar Mahila", will be launched in 2024. *—PTI*

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar and Minister Deepak Kesarkar ahead of the state Budget session on Friday *PHOTO: PTI*

TN seeks exemption from NEET, passes resolution

CHENNAI, 28 JUNE

Tamil Nadu Assembly on Friday once again passed a unanimous resolution urging the Centre to exempt the state from National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEE) and allow it to admit students to medical courses based on Plus Two exam marks.

The resolution, adopted by the House amid BJP's Opposition and walkout, called upon the Centre to amend the National Medical Commission Act and abolish the country-wide screening test taking into account the irregularities and increasing opposition to the test in several states, which toed Tamil Nadu's line.

BJP's ally, PMK, however supported the resolution piloted by Chief Minister MK Stalin, who argued it deprived an opportunity for the rural and poor students to access medical education and denied states their rights to admit students with Plus Two marks as the qualifying criteria. *—PTI*

Andhra worst hit by Jagan's govt: Naidu

AMARAVATI, 28 JUNE

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Friday alleged that the state suffered bigger damage under the previous YS Jagan Mohan Reddy-led YSRCP government than the bifurcation of united Andhra Pradesh.

Releasing a white paper on the Polavaram Project at the Secretariat, he claimed project which was completed up to 72 per cent under his regime between 2014 and 2019 had only witnessed four per cent progress in civil works in the last five years under the YSRCP government.

According to Naidu, the mega irrigation project can store 194 tmc water, enable the utilisation of 322 tmc water, irrigate 7.2 lakh acres, offer drinking water to 28.5 lakh people and generate 960 MW of hydropower.

He observed that the earlier TDP regime had spent Rs 11,762 crore and asserted that the YSRCP government had expended only Rs 4,167 crore on the project. *—PTI*

WB BAR COUNCIL TO OBSERVE 'BLACK DAY' ON 1 JULY

KOLKATA, 28 JUNE

Terming the three new laws Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, and Bharatiya Sakshya San which will replace the existing Indian Penal Code (IPC), Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) and Indian Evidence Act (IEA) as "anti-people and draconian," the Bar Council of West Bengal on Friday said it will observe a "black day" on 1 July.

The Bar Council of West Bengal has passed a resolution that lawyers practising in courts in West Bengal and Andaman and Nicobar islands will abstain from their judicial work on 1 July observing it as "black day". The Council said that lawyers practising in courts in the state and in Andaman and Nicobar islands will abstain from their judicial work on that day.

It also requested all bar associations to hold protest rallies in their respective areas.

Meanwhile, CPI(ML) Liberation MPs sought President Droupadi Murmu's "urgent intervention" to postpone the implementation of the new criminal laws that are set to come into force, saying they need a thorough review and wider consensus. *—PTI*

Amid allegations against Kerala govt, Oppn walks out

T'PURAM, 28 JUNE

The Opposition in Kerala on Friday staged a walkout after Speaker AN Shamseer refused to allow a notice for an adjournment motion on allegations against senior Left leader and Khadi Board Vice Chairman, P Jayarajan.

When the Opposition moved the motion, state Parliamentary Affairs Minister M B Rajesh objected to it citing Rule 52 (5) of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Kerala Legislative Assembly.

He said the motion shall not contain arguments, inferences, ironical expressions, imputations or defamatory statements, nor shall it refer to the conduct of people.

"The notice is just based on inferences and allegations containing defamatory statements," Rajesh said. The Speaker also confirmed the same and said the notice contained matters not related to the conduct of the Khadi Board Vice Chairman's official or public capacity.

Meanwhile, fake election ID cards allegedly used for the state Youth Congress organisational polls in Kerala were raised during the question hour in the Assembly by ruling party members on Friday and the Congress-led Opposition accused the Left government of trying to divert attention from the issues affecting it.

CPI(M) leader and Varkala MLA, V Joy, raised a question regarding a case registered over fake election ID cards used during the Kerala State Youth Congress election that was held last year.

Also, the Assembly witnessed heated exchange of words during question hour over the alleged communal campaign in Vadakara constituency during the recently concluded Lok Sabha polls.

Opposition MLAs raised questions in connection with the alleged communal campaign in Vadakara.

The MLAs were referring to a social media post put up ahead of the Vadakara election that reportedly asked people not to vote for LDF candidate K K Shailaja as she was a "kafir" (non-believer). *—PTI*

Pro-Israel posters were stuck on AIMIM MP Asaduddin Owaisi's nameplate outside his New Delhi residence for supporting Palestine *PHOTO: PTI*

Owaisi blames Centre over alleged attack at his home

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

AIMIM (All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen) Chief Asaduddin Owaisi on Friday criticised the Central government and Delhi Police for their response to the alleged vandalism at his residence.

Regarding the incident, Owaisi said, "It has not happened for the first time. Things like this are happening because the Narendra Modi government and the Prime Minister himself have radicalised such people. When the Prime Minister himself says that Muslims are infiltrators and identify them by their attires, it gives courage to such people".

"They put the flag of Israel on my home which shows these people believe in zionist ideology, an ideology that killed 40,000 people and left 12 lakh people homeless in Gaza," he added.

Slamming police after the alleged attack at his residence, he said, "Regret is that my house is in front of the Delhi Police, despite if the police does not want to arrest them then what can we say?"

Some "unknown miscreants" vandalised my house with black ink today. I have now lost count the number of times my Delhi residence has targeted. When I asked @DelhiPolice officials how this was happening right under their nose, they expressed helplessness. @AmitShah this is happening under your oversight @ombirlakota, please tell us if MPs' safety will be guaranteed or not, he said on X. *—ANI*

'SANDESHKHALI IN EVERY VILLAGE'

WB women stripped for supporting us: BJP

KOLKATA, 28 JUNE

The National Commission for Women on Friday took note of the alleged attack on a BJP woman worker in West Bengal and has demanded a detailed action report which is to be submitted to the Commission within three days.

BJP on Thursday alleged that a Muslim woman named Rosonara Khatun was stripped and beaten in West Bengal's Coochbehar for supporting their party.

The incident took place at Ramthenga Market in the Mathabhanga Assembly of Coochbehar district, claimed BJP leader Amit Malviya.

A Muslim woman was beaten in West Bengal's Coochbehar district for supporting BJP. It comes months after Sandeshkhali violence *PHOTO: PTI*

"Rosonara Khatun, a member of the BJP's Minority Morcha, was dragged by her hair and subjected to severe physical assault. This brutal incident has shocked the Muslim community. Since the announcement of the election results, she had been in a state of panic and avoided leaving her home. Currently, she is admitted to the hospital," Malviya wrote in a post on X.

Condemning the incident, the National Commission for Women said that it has directed the police to invoke relevant provisions of the Indian Penal Code in the FIR.

The concern over the alleged attack on Women in West Bengal comes days after the Sandeshkhali violence.

Both BJP and Trinamool Congress have been levelling charges against each other over Sandeshkhali. *—PTI*

Deputy NSA Vikram Misri named next Foreign Secretary

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

Deputy National Security Adviser (NSA) Vikram Misri was on Friday named as the next Foreign Secretary, according to an official order. Misri, a 1989 batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer, has been appointed to the post with effect from 15 July, it said. He will succeed Vinay Mohan Kwatra, who was in March this year given a six months' extension. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of Misri, Deputy NSA in the National Security Council Secretariat, to the post of Foreign Secretary with effect from 15 July, said the order issued by the Personnel Ministry. It also approved the curtailment of Misri's tenure as the Deputy NSA. —*PTI*

Delhi cops make 1st arrest in Burger King Murder case

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

The Delhi Police on Friday stated that it has made its first arrest in connection with the recent murder of a man at a food outlet in west Delhi's Rajouri Garden. The arrested accused is the one who allegedly brought the two shooters in his vehicle at the spot to commit the crime, a senior police officer said. The accused is being further interrogated. Aman Joon, 26, hailing from Haryana was shot dead by two gangsters while he was sitting with a woman inside a Burger King outlet in Rajouri Garden's J Block on 18 June.The victim had suffered 38 gunshot wounds. Joon's killing was an outcome of a gang war between jailed gangsters Neeraj Bawana and Ashok Pradhan. Three other suspects, the woman who accompanied Joon and the two shooters, are still at large. —*PTI*

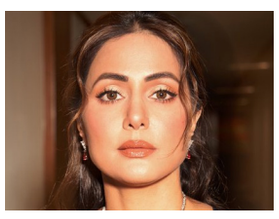


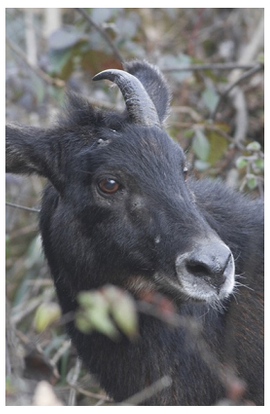
PHOTO: X/@EYEHINAKHAN

Hina Khan reveals stage three breast cancer

MUMBAI, 28 JUNE

Popular TV personality Hina Khan on Friday revealed that she has been diagnosed with stage three breast cancer. The actor, known for starring in long-running TV serial "Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai", shared the news in a post on Instagram. "Hello Everyone, to address the recent rumour, I want to share some important news with all the Hinaholics and everyone who loves and cares for me. I have been diagnosed with stage three breast cancer," Khan, 36, said. Despite the challenging diagnosis, the actor assured her fans that she is "doing well". "I am strong, determined and fully committed to overcoming this disease. My treatment has already begun and I am ready to do everything necessary to emerge from this even stronger," Khan wrote.. —*PTI*

Vulnerable mammal spotted in Assam



The first photographic evidence of the 'Mainland Serow,' a vulnerable mammal species has been documented in Assam's Raimona National Park by forest officials and conservationists, an official said. The Mainland Serow population is widely distributed in the neighboring Phibsoo Wildlife Sanctuary and the Royal Manas National Park of Bhutan, which may contribute to the population recovery in Raimona National Park. —*PTI*

People wade through a waterlogged roads; Rescue work underway after an under-construction wall collapsed during rain, at Vasant Vihar; Vehicles stuck in a traffic jam on a road after rain, in New Delhi, on Friday *PHOTO: PTI*

HEAVY RAIN BRINGS DELHI TO ITS KNEES

Traffic comes to halt and people are left in a tizzy while wading through flooded streets

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

As heavy rain lashed Delhi early Friday, waterlogging in many areas of the city led to a flood-like situation forcing vehicles to craw amid massive traffic jams.

Delhi Traffic Police issued alerts to notify the affected carriageways, advising commuters to plan their journey accordingly.

Visuals coming from various parts of the city showed several areas inundated with water, leading to long traffic jams which affected commuters, especially, office-goers.

The Delhi Police said they received several calls regarding traffic issues, waterlogging and uprooting of trees since the morning.

At the New Delhi Railway Station, people had to walk through knee-deep water, carrying children to navigate the flooded roads. Water also filled metro stations in some areas, adding to the discomfort of the commuters.

Many commuters also took to social media platform X to share updates regarding the traffic situation across the national capital.

Some of them claimed that the Barapullah Elevated road was completely choked, while the traffic was also heavy near Mundka-Nagloi road.

Wall collapses, 3 labourers feared trapped

Three labourers are feared trapped after an under-construction wall collapsed in southwest Delhi's Vasant Vihar area, officials said on Friday. Three construction workers are feared to be trapped in the mud slush but the exact numbers are yet to be ascertained, a senior police officer said. Rescue teams of NDRF, DDMA, civics agencies, fire and police are on the spot and efforts are underway to rescue them, he added.

Cranes are being used to remove the rubble, while water is being removed with the help of pumps, he added. —*PTI*

MeT issues 'orange warning' in Himachal for 2 days

Shimla, 28 June

Heavy rains lashed Shimla and surrounding areas on Friday and the MeT department issued an 'orange warning' indicating "very heavy rain", thunderstorms and lightning at isolated places in seven of the 12 districts in the state over the weekend. In another incident, four roads -- two in Kangra and one each in Kinnaur and Kullu districts -- have been blocked for vehicular traffic following rains as per the state emergency operation centre. State capital Shimla and surrounding areas received heavy rains and Jubbarhatti in the suburbs received 136 mm of rain on Thursday evening while Shimla received 84 mm of rain. —*PTI*

UNION ENV MIN BLAMES PLASTIC WASTE AMID RAIN

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav attributed the waterlogging in Delhi following torrential rains on Friday morning to drains being clogged with plastic waste and criticised the Delhi government for its inaction despite multiple reminders.

The Safdarjung Observatory, the city's primary weather station, recorded 228.1 mm of rainfall in the 24 hours ending at 8.30 am on Friday, more than three times the June rainfall average of 74.1 mm and the highest for the month in at least 16 years.

"We banned single-use plastic and also asked the Delhi government to take action. We have asked the Delhi government's industries department several times to close down these (single-use plastic manufacturing) units," Yadav said. . —*PTI*

Delhi's power demand grew 3.8 times in a year

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

Delhi recorded a sizable jump in temperature-related electricity demand in the last 12 months, with peak demand rising by an average of 711 megawatts (MW) on the hottest and most humid days, according to a new analysis published on Friday.

The wet-bulb temperature (WBT) is the lowest temperature to which a person or object can be cooled solely by the evaporation of water.

At the other end of the temperature scale, the increase was smaller on very cold and dry days (7.5 degrees Celsius WBT) but still significant at 506 MW, or 2.7 times higher than the increase on moderate days.

Given that heatwaves may soon become the norm, the burden of power generation cannot be borne solely by thermal plants, which are operating closer to full capacity than in recent years. IEEFA suggests that India should ramp up utility-scale solar rather than boost thermal capacity. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

- Given that heatwaves may soon become the norm, the burden of power generation cannot be borne solely by thermal plants which are closer to its full capacity

Rich nations must fund developing nations for climate crisis: Env Min

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

Developed countries historically responsible for maximum carbon emissions should come forward and own the responsibility of providing finance to developing countries to address the climate crisis, Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav said on Friday.

Climate finance will be at the centre of the UN climate conference in Baku, Azerbaijan, where the world will reach the deadline to agree on the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) -- the new amount developed nations must mobilise every year starting in 2025 to support climate action in developing countries.

Bhupender Yadav *PHOTO: PTI*

"Temperature rise is a global problem. IPCC reports clearly say the increase in carbon emissions is driving average global temperatures up. Countries have prepared their Nationally Determined Contributions. India has achieved its climate targets, be it in the renewable energy sector or reducing carbon emissions," Yadav said at the India Climate Summit organised by Times Network.

With the Earth's global surface temperature already 1.15 degrees Celsius above the average in 1850-1900, climate scientists say countries need to take urgent action to reduce heat-trapping greenhouse gas emissions by at least 43 per cent by 2030 (compared to 2019 levels) to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Now, rich countries are expected to raise more than USD 100 billion, with developing countries demanding trillions of dollars to tackle climate change. —*PTI*

REPORT REVEALS

5B survived extreme heat in June; 619M affected in India

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

Nearly five billion people globally, including 619 million from India, experienced climate-change-driven extreme heat over nine days in June, according to a new analysis by an independent group of scientists based in the US.

The report by Climate Central said that the blistering heat in June impacted 619 million people in India. India, which experienced one of its hottest and longest heat waves, recorded more than 40,000 suspected heat stroke cases and over 100 heat-related deaths.

The intense heat overwhelmed the water supply system and power grids, with Delhi grappling with a severe water crisis.

According to the India Meteorological Department, around 40 per cent of the country recorded double the number of heatwave days than usual during the April to June period. The report also said the heat affected 579 million in China, 231 million in Indonesia, 206 million in Nigeria, 176 million in Brazil, 171 million in Bangladesh, 165 million in the US, 152 million in Europe, 123 million in Mexico, and 121 million in Ethiopia. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

2 held in stone pelting during OBC rally in M'rashtra

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR, 28 JUNE

The police held two persons and booked 15-20 others after some people resorted to stone pelting in pro-Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange's village in Maharashtra's Beed district on Friday.

The incident took place on Thursday night at Matori village, prompting authorities to deploy the State Reserve Police Force there to maintain peace.

It all started when some people from nearby villages were passing through Matori around 8pm to take part in a rally of OBC quota agitators Laxman Hake and Navnath Waghmare.

Some people raised slogans which then led to stone pelting near the bus stand. Amid rising tension at the spot, police intervened and detained two persons.

The situation is fully under control at Matori village, he added. —*PTI*

DyCM says police chief had role in Pune crash probe

MUMBAI, 28 JUNE

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Friday told the legislative assembly that Pune police Chief Amitesh Kumar had a proactive role in the investigation into the Porsche crash and there was nothing to suggest that action should be taken against him.

Fadnavis made the assertions during a debate on the high-profile case raised through a calling attention notice. During the debate, Leader of Opposition Vijay Wadettiwar demanded the Pune police commissioner's resignation.

Conceding that there are issues of "use of money to buy justice", Fadnavis said, "This should not be allowed. We have to see how laws can be strengthened further. The issue is serious but there is no need to defame Pune police. They have taken action in the case. Erring police officials have been punished."

Two software professionals lost their lives after their bike was hit by a speeding Porsche in Pune's Kalyani Nagar area in the early hours of 19 May. According to police, a 17-year-old minor was driving the high-end car in a drunken state at the time of the accident. Two cops attached to the Yerawada police station were suspended for alleged dereliction of duty in connection with the case. —*PTI*

PETA seeks rehab of jumbo that killed mahout

IDUKKI, 28 JUNE

Following a tragic killing of a mahout by a jumbo called Lakshmi last week at an allegedly illegally run elephant park in high range district of Kerala, animal rights organisation, The People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) has urged the state's wildlife department to rehabilitate the pachyderm at a sanctuary.

PETA India has also called for permanent closure of all illegal safari parks in Kerala and rehabilitation of all the elephants held captive there. —*PTI*

Drug deals busted in TN, Punjab & Assam

CHENNAI/CHANDIGARH/ GUWAHATI, 28 JUNE

Over 2,000 grams of cocaine worth Rs 21 crore was seized from an air passenger who arrived here from Ghana, the Customs department said on Friday.

In total, cocaine weighing 2,095 grams worth Rs 21 crore was recovered from the woman under relevant sections of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985. She has been arrested and is currently lodged in Central Prison, Puzhal. Punjab Police on Friday said it has unearthed one of the biggest interstate opium smuggling syndicates operating from Jharkhand with the arrest of two "big drug smugglers" and seizure of 66 kg drugs.

The opium was kept concealed in specially designed and fabricated compartments fitted underneath their car.

Heroin valued at Rs 19 crore seized in Assam

Meanwhile, heroin worth over Rs 19 crore was seized and six people were arrested in three separate operations in Assam, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Friday.

The police conducted a special operation at Digharkhal Toll Gate in Cachar district and seized 1.881 kgs of heroin, the CM said in a post on 'X'. —*PTI*

'IN PUBLIC INTEREST'

Centre to retire non-performing workers

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

Irked over non-adherence to its directives, the Centre has asked all ministries to timely review the working of the employees so that the non-performers are prematurely retired from service.

In an order, the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) asked ministries concerned to direct the public sector undertakings (PSUs), banks, autonomous institutions and statutory bodies under their administrative control to undertake the exercise of periodic review of employees. The administrative ministries and departments have repeatedly been requested to adhere to guidelines issued in this regard and furnish a report to this effect to the DoPT, said the order issued to the secretaries of all central government departments.

Decisions come to force over non-adherence of officials *PHOTO: FREEPIK*

These rules lay down the policy of periodic review and premature retirement of government servants and to ensure efficiency, economy and speed in the disposal of the government functions.

Further, all the ministries, departments and organisations have been asked "to strictly adhere" to the timeline mentioned in DoPT's order issued in this regard in 2020 "for undertaking the exercise of review of performance of the government servants and for the employees of PSUs/banks/autonomous institutions/statutory organisations under their administrative control to ensure that the employees with doubtful integrity or found to be ineffective are not allowed to continue in government", according to the order.

All ministries and departments have been asked to furnish a report to the DoPT in a particular format by the 15th day of each month starting from July, 2024, it added. —*PTI*

Min: Let husbands drink at home to kick addiction

BHOPAL, 28 JUNE

Madhya Pradesh Cabinet Minister Narayan Singh Kushwaha on Friday advised women to ask their husbands to bring liquor at home and drink it, in order to make them feel ashamed and quit drinking.

Narayan Singh Kushwaha, Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, made the remark while addressing a Nasha Mukti Abhiyan program in the state capital Bhopal.

"Those men who come home after consuming liquor from outside, their wives should tell them to bring the liquor at home and drink it. If they consume alcohol in front of women and children at home, they will feel ashamed and it will gradually let them get rid of the addiction of drinking," the minister said.

Narayan Singh Kushwaha *PHOTO: PTI*

"Women should not cook food for those who come home after consuming alcohol. Women should make 'Belan' gangs and show Belan to those who come after having liquor. Many people are not able to do this because of social values but values should not come in the way of stopping wrongdoings," Minister Kushwaha added. —*PTI*

MANIPUR MARCHES

In a rally organised by the Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity, demanding territorial and administrative integrity of the state amid the ongoing ethnic conflict between Meiteis and Kukis, in Imphal, on Friday. The people of Manipur from all communities except sections of the Kuki tribes fighting for a separate land put forward conditions for the central government to consider. The Kuki tribes want a separate administration or 'Kukiland' between Mizoram and Myanmar. People from all age groups shouted slogans against illegal immigrants from Myanmar. ***PHOTO: PTI***

Forest fires scorch mountains amid heat

On the evening of 27 April, Madhavi Daruwala noticed the air around her housing complex in the northern town of Nainital suddenly grow heavier with smoke.

"The smoke was so thick, it was burning our eyes. My daughter has asthma and she had to go back on her inhaler [to be able to breathe normally]," Daruwala told Al Jazeera.

A longtime resident of the scenic Himalayan town that is a popular tourist destination in the state of Uttarakhand, Daruwala knew immediately what had happened: The nearby forests and vegetation were on fire again.

At least 1,313 large fires have ravaged the hills of Uttarakhand since November – among the highest count in the country. Officials estimate the fires have already damaged nearly 1,100 hectares (about 2,718 acres) – about three times the size of New York's Central Park – of forest land in the state.

Nainital residents say the frequency and intensity of the fires have worsened in recent years, and that the fires are reaching increasingly closer to human settlements.

The panicked residents of the area quickly mobilised, beating down the fire while the forest department sent people to help them.

Fires are common in pine forests during the hot dry months before the monsoon rains ***PHOTO: PTI***

Are heatwaves to blame?

The region has witnessed reduced winter precipitation in recent years. That in turn has left vegetation dry. "Then there is El Nino [unusually warm ocean temperatures that affect climate] that is adding to the dryness and heat," Raghu Murtugudde, climate scientist and professor at the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay, told Al Jazeera.

It is an explosive mix – literally.

Experts say heatwaves have contributed to rising fire incidents across India. In 2023, India experienced some of its worst heatwaves on record since 1901, with temperatures in parts of the country touching 45 degrees Celsius (113 degrees Fahrenheit). This year, the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has already declared multiple heatwaves, with the capital of New Delhi recording temperatures as high as 52.9C (127.2F) in May, resulting in more than 100 people dead.

According to the Forest Survey of India (FSI), nearly 10.66 percent of the country's forest cover is under "extremely to very highly fire-prone zone".

Uttarakhand state authorities have said the fires are man-made, and at least three individuals have been arrested. "In the Indian context, almost all forest fires are man-made," said Mohan Chandra Pargaien, an Indian forest official in the southern Telangana state, which too has been experiencing frequent fires.

Locals and animal herders across the country are often known to burn the stubble that remains after grain is harvested, as well as dry grass. In Uttarakhand, they also look to clear the fallen pine needles to make way for fresh vegetation that is used as pasture for their animals, Pargaien said.

Pargaien hails from Nainital and is familiar with the increase in the frequency of forest fires. Increasing heat adds to the challenges that officials face in controlling wildfires, the forest official said.

'The forest was not always this dry'

Daruwala, the Nainital resident, also added that the state had received little to no rains this past season creating water shortages. The rains also serve as fire extinguishers. "The rains played a big role last year in helping stop the fires. But this year, there has been lesser rains. The climate has been drier," she said. "The forest was not always this dry."

Human activity along with with worsening heat and climate patterns make for a fatal combination. "With Uttarakhand, it's a hilly terrain, with high-intensity winds shifting fast. Also, a lot of the trees are pine, which are highly flammable. These factors contribute to the fire spreading faster and also make it challenging to control," she said.

Prevention and preparedness

There is a need for long-term planning, Murtugudde, the climate scientist, said. The existing climate change predictions, he said, are inadequate in helping countries like India prepare for such calamities.

"They don't give you very location-specific information. Nor do they factor in geopolitical scenarios like the Israel-Palestine war or the Ukraine-Russian conflict," he said, referring to the 2100 projections by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) that predict warming between 1.2 and 4.1 degrees Celsius by the end of the century. The wars in Gaza and Ukraine are believed to have led to an expansion in greenhouse emissions – the weapons industry, which has been in overdrive, is a major polluter.

"It was well-known that this season was going to be dry and hot because we knew that 2023 was warm, but we don't know yet what will come in the next decade. That should guide the forest protection management in its efforts for prevention," he added.

Since many of the fires are man-made, Pargaien said more efforts made towards raising awareness of forest conservation would help, along with steps to minimise activy,

Many communities depend on the forest and the surrounding lands, specifically to support animal husbandry and other allied activities such as the gathering of wood for fuel.

Though the fire did not reach Daruwala's apartment, the air in her home remained hazy for days. "It has to burn out, and along the way can cause tremendous damage," she said. "My heart goes out to all the birds and wildlife that lived in the forests. We have seen some injured animals, but we don't know how many creatures have died."

"When it comes to a conflict between humans and animals or a forest, human interests take precedence. But we must not forget that we have entered the forest, and it is our duty to look after it," she said.

—Al Jazeera

SALAR ساہر

Will World Cup bid adieu to its batting legends?

In 2011, the last time India won a cricket World Cup, everybody knew it would be batter Sachin Tendulkar's final chance.

He was 39, it was his sixth attempt, and the team's unofficial slogan was "Let's do it for Sachin".

After skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni hit the winning six, Virat Kohli, who was among those who carried Tendulkar on their shoulders, said memorably, "He has carried our batting on his shoulders for so long, it is time we carried him on our shoulders."

And now Kohli, Tendulkar's natural successor who turns 36 this year, is in the twilight of his own career.

The next T20 World Cup is in 2026, and the 50-over version in 2027. Kohli is fitter than Tendulkar was, but it is difficult to see him play white ball cricket at that level again. Captain Rohit Sharma, 37, might be playing his last World Cup too.

There has been no "Let's do it for Kohli" or "Let's do it for Rohit" cry in the Indian team, unless these have been done more discreetly than before. Perhaps there is a "Let's do it for [Rahul] Dravid," lingering in the air. For the Indian coach, who missed the 2011 World Cup, this is his final assignment with the national team.

Increasingly, T20 is turning into a young man's game, a young man who can't be bothered about personal statistics, but is focused on where his next six is coming from. This is a cultural change in Indian cricket that is going unnoticed - too many big players in the past have shown an unhealthy concern about how they look in the record books where figures stand shorn of context.

Sharma's stunning 92 against Australia pointed out to the next generation how strike rates mattered more than averages in T20. When Tendulkar made his 100th international century it was much lauded. But India lost the match.

India's white ball team - especially in T20 - is in transition. Ten members of this squad are over 30, three above 35. And more determined hitters are coming through the system.

Shubhman Gill is leading an Indian T20 squad to Zimbabwe for a five-match T20 series next month. India's future is represented there, with the likes of Yashasvi Jaiswal (unlucky not to play in the T20 World Cup, although he might still do so), Riyan Parag, Abhishek Sharma, Dhruv Jurel, Nitish Kumar, Ravi Bishnoi, all under 25, and Rinku Singh a shade over.

The over-35s in the current squad in the West Indies include Ravindra Jadeja, while Suryakumar Yadav, the top batter in the format approaches 34.

Age ought not to matter, form and fitness should decide. Yet, T20 is a tricky format. Experience might actually work against a player, where strategy and tactics move at great pace and yesterday's philosophies no longer apply.

T20 was a different beast when Kohli and Sharma first began to make their mark on it.

That they have been able to keep pace with the likes of Suryakumar and Jaiswal (No 7 in the world) is a tribute to their adaptability. It is possible that one or both of them might call it quits after the current World Cup. If India win, they can't go any higher and they would have moved aside after a triumph. If they lose, there will be pressure on them to make way. Sports can be cruel.

When India lost the 50-over World Cup in the final to Australia last year, the country went into mourning.

The players were heartbroken, none more palpably than Kohli and Sharma who had both had a good tournament as India went into the final unbeaten. And then they fluffed it. Neither would get a ride on teammates shoulders. Each knew the chance might never come again.

Hence, the quest for redemption at the T20 World Cup. Somehow careers are deemed incomplete without a world crown, no matter what the format. A triumph is a happier starting point for transition. *—BBC News*

T20 was a different beast when Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma first began to make their mark on it. It is possible that one or both of them might call it quits after the current World Cup ***PHOTO: BBC NEWS***

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Amid Gaza heat, sewage & garbage surrond Palestinians

Children in sandals trudge through water contaminated with sewage and scale growing mounds of garbage in Gaza's crowded tent camps for displaced families.

People relieve themselves in burlap-covered pits, with nowhere nearby to wash their hands.

In the stifling summer heat, Palestinians say the odour and filth surrounding them is just another inescapable reality of war — like pangs of hunger or sounds of bombing.

The territory's ability to dispose of garbage, treat sewage and deliver clean water has been virtually decimated by eight brutal months of war between Israel and Hamas.

This has made grim living conditions worse and raised health risks for hundreds of thousands of people deprived of adequate shelter, food and medicine, aid groups say.

Hepatitis A cases are on the rise, and doctors fear that as warmer weather arrives, an outbreak of cholera is increasingly likely without dramatic changes to living conditions. The UN, aid groups and local officials are scrambling to build latrines, repair water lines and bring desalination plants back online.

COGAT, the Israeli military body coordinating humanitarian aid efforts, said it's engaging in efforts to improve the "hygiene situation." But relief can't come soon enough.

"Flies are in our food," said Adel Dalloul, a 21-year-old whose family settled in a beach tent camp near the central Gaza city of Nuseirat.

They wound up there after fleeing the southern city of Rafah, where they landed after leaving their northern Gaza home. "If you try to sleep, flies, insects and cockroaches are all over you."

Over a million Palestinians had been living in hastily assembled tent camps in Rafah before Israel invaded in May. Since fleeing Rafah, many have taken shelter in even more crowded and unsanitary areas across southern and central Gaza that doctors describe as breeding grounds for disease — especially as temperatures regularly reach 90 degrees Fahrenheit (32 degrees Celsius).

Basic services breakdown

The UN estimates nearly 70 per cent of Gaza's water and sanitation plants have been destroyed or damaged by Israel's heavy bombardment. That includes all five of the territory's wastewater treatment facilities, plus water desalination plants, sewage pumping stations, wells and reservoirs.

Many have taken shelter in even more crowded and unsanitary areas across southern and central Gaza that doctors describe as breeding grounds for diseases ***PHOTO: BBC NEWS***

The employees who once managed municipal water and waste systems have been displaced, and some killed, officials say.

This month, an Israeli strike in Gaza City killed five government employees repairing water wells, the city said.

Despite staffing shortages and damaged equipment, some desalination plants and sewage pumps are working, but they're hampered by lack of fuel, aid workers say.

A UN assessment of two Deir al-Balah tent camps found in early June that people's daily water consumption — including drinking, washing and cooking — averaged under 2 litres, far lower than the recommended 15 litres a day.

COGAT said it's coordinating with the UN to repair sewage facilities and Gaza's water system. Israel has opened three water lines "pumping millions of litres daily" into Gaza, it said.

But people often wait hours in line to collect potable water from delivery trucks, hauling back to their families whatever they can carry. The scarcity means families often wash with dirty water.

This week, Dalloul said, he lined up for water from a vendor. "We discovered that it was salty, polluted, and full of germs. We found worms in the water. I had been drinking from it," he said. "I had gastrointestinal problems and diarrhea, and my stomach hurts until this moment."

The World Health Organisation declared an outbreak of Hepatitis A that, as of early June, had led to 81,700 reported cases of jaundice — a common symptom. The disease spreads primarily when uninfected people consume water or food contaminated with fecal matter.

Because wastewater treatment plants have shut down, untreated sewage is seeping into the ground or being pumped into the Mediterranean Sea, where tides move north toward Israel.

Where can garbage go?

Standing barefoot on a street in the Nuseirat refugee camp, 62-year-old Abu Shadi Afana compared the pile of garbage next to him to a "waterfall." He said trucks continue to dump rubbish even though families live in tents nearby.

"There is no one to provide us with a tent, food, or drink, and on top of all of this, we live in garbage?" Afana said. Trash attracts bugs he's never seen before in Gaza — small insects that stick to his skin.

When he lies down, he said, he feels like they're "eating his face."

There are few other places for the garbage to go. When Israel's military took control of a 1-kilometre buffer zone along its border with Gaza, two main landfills east of the cities of Khan Younis and Gaza City became off-limits.

In their absence, informal landfills have developed. Displaced Palestinians running out of areas to shelter say they've had little choice but to pitch tents near trash piles.

Cholera fears

Doctors in Gaza fear cholera may be on the horizon.

Most patients have illnesses or infections caused by poor sanitation, she said. Scabies, gastrointestinal illnesses and rashes are common. Over 485,000 diarrhea cases have been reported since the war's start, WHO says.

COGAT says it's coordinating delivery of vaccines and medical supplies and is in daily contact with Gaza health officials. COGAT is "unaware of any authentic, verified report of unusual illnesses other than viral illnesses," it said.

With efforts stalled to broker a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas, Dalloul says he's lost hope that help is on the way.

—PTI

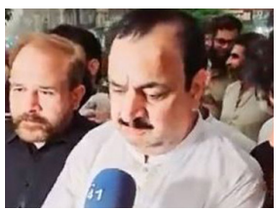


PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

Pak man threatens against reopening of Gurdwara

FAISALABAD, PAKISTAN, 28 JUNE

A widely shared video on social media shows local Muslims in Faisalabad, Pakistan, opposing the reopening of a Gurdwara that has been closed for 76 years. Challenging the authority of the Punjab government, a protester could be seen threatening to disrupt the Gurdwara's reconstruction. According to reports, the person seen in the video, who is leading the protest is the deputy mayor of Faisalabad Ameen Bhutt. The individual in the video can be heard using derogatory language against the Sikh community. Pakistan's religious minorities, including Hindus and Sikhs, face ongoing challenges such as discriminatory laws, social exclusion, and periodic outbreaks of violence fueled by religious extremism. *—ANI*

Japan protests sex assault cases involving US

TOKYO, 28 JUNE

Japan's government protested Friday to the US Embassy in Tokyo over at least two sexual assault cases involving American service members on the southern Japanese island of Okinawa which were only recently made public. In one case, an Air Force member is accused of assaulting a 16-year-old girl in December, while the other, which dates from May, involves a Marine who is accused of assaulting a 21-year-old woman. The case involving the assault of the teenager is a reminder to many Okinawans of the high-profile 1995 rape of a 12-year-old girl by three US servicemembers, which sparked massive protests against the heavy US troop presence on Okinawa. *—PTI*

7 dead after train and bus collide in Slovakia

BRATISLAVA, 28 JUNE

Seven people have been killed and five injured after an international express train collided with a bus on a level crossing in southern Slovakia, officials say. The Slovak ambulance service said all those who died had been travelling on the bus. They had been badly burnt in the subsequent fire and it was proving difficult to identify their remains, said Interior Minister Matus Sutaj Estok. Thursday's accident happened near the town of Nove Zamky, about 80km east of the capital Bratislava, just after 5 pm. About 200 people were on the train and nine on the bus at the time of the collision, officials said. The drivers of both the bus and the train were among the injured. The bus was sliced in half by the impact of the collision. *—BBC NEWS*

ISIS ideology resonates in SE Asia: Singapore

SINGAPORE, 28 JUNE

The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) ideology continues to resonate in the Southeast Asian region and is fuelled by a virtual network of supporters, Singapore's Home Affairs and Law Minister K Shanmugam has warned. "ISIS' violent ideology continues to resonate in this region and is fuelled by a virtual network of supporters," The Straits Times quoted the Minister as saying on Friday. Shanmugam expressed concern in comments that the latest spate of arrests in Malaysia shows that violent ISIS ideology continues to resonate in the region. While the authorities in Singapore will do their best to detect and prevent any terrorist attack here, Singaporeans need to stay vigilant and report any suspicious behaviour, he underscored. *—PTI*

US opted out of Paris pact due to India, China: Trump

He alleged that the two nations were not contributing enough

ATLANTA, 28 JUNE

Former US president Donald Trump has said his administration opted out of the landmark Paris Climate Accord in 2017 as it was a "rip-off" which would have cost Washington USD 1 trillion, as he claimed that India, China and Russia weren't paying for it.

Trump, the presumptive candidate of the Republican Party, made the claims at the first of presidential debates with his Democratic Party rival President Joe Biden on Thursday, where the two 2024 presidential candidates sparred over the state of the economy, border, foreign policy, abortion, national security and climate change.

During their roughly 90-minute debate marred by personal attacks, Trump, 78, claimed that the Paris Climate Accord would have cost USD 1 trillion and the US was the only country that had to pay.

Calling it a "rip-off", he said that China, India and Russia weren't paying.

In 2017, Trump pulled the US out of the 2015 Paris climate agreement, saying the international deal to keep global temperatures rising below 2 degrees Celsius was disadvantageous to US workers.

In 2017, former US president Donald Trump had pulled the US out of the 2015 Paris climate agreement *PHOTO: PTI*

As part of the Paris Agreement, in 2009, the US and other developed nations committed to collectively contribute USD 100 billion per year by 2020 to help poorer, developing countries, predominantly in the Global South, adapt to the impacts of climate change like sea level rise and worsening heat.

According to a CNN report, developed nations met their collective goal two years late in 2022, but the figure has never been as high as Trump suggested.

Contrary to what Trump said, the US has never paid USD 1 trillion in international climate finance, according to the report.

- President Biden has pledged USD 11.4 billion annually from the US, but this level of funding hasn't materialised, the report said

The US paid nothing to the global finance goal after Trump pulled the country out of the Paris accord.

President Biden has pledged USD 11.4 billion annually from the US, but this level of funding hasn't materialised, the report said.

Trump, a known climate change sceptic, has continuously argued that countries like China and India are benefiting the most from the Paris Agreement.

China is the world's biggest carbon emitter followed by the US, India and the EU. *—AP*

US ELECTIONS

Would be an honour to be running mate of Trump: Ramaswamy

ATLANTA, 28 JUNE

Vivek Ramaswamy *PHOTO: X/@VIVEKGRAMASWAMY*

Indian-American millionaire entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy, who was once a rival of former president Donald Trump, has said though he has not been asked, he would be "honoured" to serve in the Trump administration as his running mate.

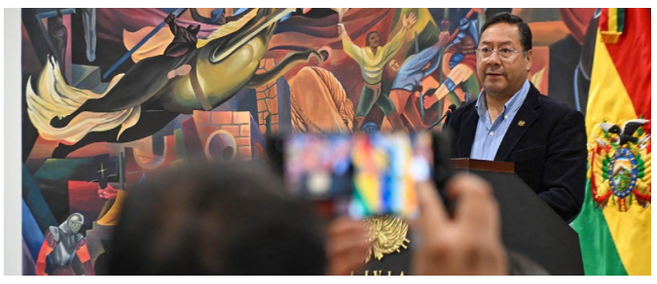
Ramaswamy, however, made it clear that he has not been approached by the Trump Campaign.

Ramaswamy, 38, dropped out of the 2024 Republican Party presidential race in January after a disappointing showing in the Iowa caucuses and endorsed Trump. Previously, some US media reported that Ramaswamy could be among the frontrunners.

Virtually unknown before he announced his run for president, Ramaswamy rose to third place in national polls over the summer, amid a slew of appearances on cable news.

While talking to reporters on Thursday on the sidelines of the Biden-Trump Presidential debate in Atlanta, the biotech entrepreneur said, "I think one of the things about Donald Trump, I have seen in him and that doesn't really come across on television is that he is more ambitious for the second term, to be even more successful than the first term." Asked about the possibility of being elected as Vice-President on behalf of the Republican Party, Ramaswamy said he hasn't been asked but would be "honoured" to serve in a Trump administration.

"We've had a lot of conversations about the future. He has not asked me to be his Vice President, whoever he asks is going to have a remarkable ability to serve this country and take that America first agenda even further," he said. *—AP*



Opposition senators accused President Luis Arce of the attempted coup which took place on Wednesday *PHOTO: X/@LUCHOXBOLIVIA*

Bolivian Prez lambasts accusations of self-coup

LA PAZ, 28 JUNE

Bolivian President Luis Arce on Thursday angrily called accusations that he was behind an attempted coup against his government "lies," saying the General who apparently led it acted on his own and vowing that he would face justice. Arce's comments, his first to the press since Wednesday's failed apparent coup, came after the general involved, Juan José Zúñiga, alleged without providing evidence that the President had ordered him to carry out the mutiny in a ruse to boost his flagging popularity.

That fueled speculation about what really happened, even after the government announced the arrest of 17 people, most of them military officers. Opposition senators and government critics joined the chorus of doubters, calling the mutiny a "self-coup."

Some Bolivians said they believed Zúñiga's allegations. "They are playing with the intelligence of the people, because nobody believes that it was a real coup," said 48-year-old lawyer Evaristo Mamani.

Those claims have been strongly denied by Arce and his government.

Meanwhile, Arce's supporters rallied outside the presidential palace on Thursday, giving some political breathing room to the embattled leader as authorities made more arrests in a failed coup that shook the economically troubled country.

Among the 17 people arrested are the Army Chief, General Zúñiga, and former navy Vice Adm. Juan Arnez Salvador, who were taken into custody the day before. All face charges of armed uprising and attacks against government infrastructure. *—AP*

Iran goes to Presidential poll with limited options

DUBAI, 28 JUNE

Iranians voted on Friday in a snap election to replace the late president Ebrahim Raisi, killed in a helicopter crash last month, as public apathy has become pervasive in the Islamic Republic after years of economic woes, mass protests and tensions in the Middle East.

Voters face a choice between hard-line candidates and a little-known politician who belongs to Iran's reformist movement that seeks to change its Shiite theocracy from within.

As has been the case since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, women and those calling for radical change have been barred from the ballot while the vote itself will have no oversight from internationally recognised monitors.

Meanwhile, Iran continues to enrich uranium at near weapons-grade levels and maintains a stockpile large enough to build — should it choose to do so — several nuclear weapons.

While Iran's 85-year-old Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has the final say on all matters of state, presidents can bend the country's policies toward confrontation or negotiation with the West.

Voters face a choice between hard-line candidates and little-known names who belong to Iran's reformist movement *PHOTO: X/@ TÜRKIYE TODAY*

Analysts broadly describe the race as a three-way contest. There are two hard-liners, former nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili and the parliament speaker, Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf. A Shiite cleric, Mostafa Pourmohammadi, also has remained in the race despite polling poorly.

Then there's the reformist candidate Masoud Pezeshkian, who has aligned himself with figures such as former President Hassan Rouhani under whose administration Tehran struck the landmark 2015 nuclear deal with world powers.

A higher turnout could boost Pezeshkian's chances, but it remains unclear if he can gain the momentum needed to draw voters to the ballot. There have been calls for a boycott, including from imprisoned Nobel Peace Prize laureate Narges Mohammadi.

The voting began just after President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump concluded their first televised debate for the US presidential election, during which Iran came up. *—AP*

Rishi Sunak *PHOTO: X/@RISHISUNAK*

Far-right UK activist uses racist slur for Sunak

LONDON, 28 JUNE

A campaigner for the far-right Reform UK was filmed using a racist slur for British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, forcing the party's leader and general election candidate Nigel Farage to condemn the actions as "appalling".

Reform UK is fielding hundreds of candidates in the 4 July election on an anti-immigration stance with the hope of posing a major challenge for the incumbent Conservative Party, which is heavily trailing in the polls.

However, with the election called earlier than expected, the party has been unable to fully vet all its campaigners and one of them – Andrew Parker – was filmed by an undercover reporter from Channel 4 attacking Sunak's South Asian heritage.

The 60-year-old divisive politician is making his eighth attempt to be elected to Parliament after seven failed bids. Farage says his goal is to get a foothold and lead the "real" Opposition to a Labour Party government *—AP*

Taiwanese asked not to travel to China

TAIPEI, 28 JUNE

Taiwan has urged its citizens to avoid travel to China and the semi-autonomous Chinese territories of Hong Kong and Macao following threats from Beijing to execute supporters of the self-governing island democracy's independence.

Deputy head of the Mainland Affairs Council Liang Wen-chieh issued the advisory at a news conference on Thursday.

That came amid growing threats from China, which claims Taiwan as its own territory to be annexed by force if necessary.

China's threat to hunt down and execute "hardcore" Taiwan independence supporters follows the election of Lai Ching-te of the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party as president. China has refused all contact with Taiwan's government since the election in 2016 of former president Tsai Ing-wen of the DPP, who refused to endorse Beijing's demand that Taiwan recognizes itself as a part of China, seen as a prelude to political unification between the sides.

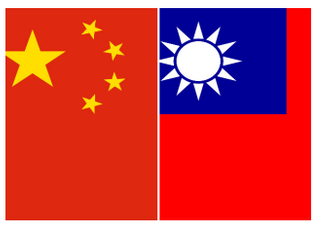


PHOTO: ANI

"In response to the new guidelines related to the so-called secession crime', the government has the responsibility to remind citizens that there are genuine risks involved" in such visits, Liang said. The government is not banning visits, but those that do travel should not express political opinions or carry books or post online about topics that the authoritarian Communist Party would use to detain and potentially prosecute them. Hundreds of thousands of Taiwanese live in China or travel there for business, tourism or family visits each year. *—AP*

Philippine troops kill 10 suspected rebels in clash

MANILA, 28 JUNE

Philippine troops killed at least 10 suspected communist guerrillas in a clash in a remote northern area in the latest blow to a decades-old insurgency that has weakened considerably, with only about a thousand guerrillas remaining, military and security officials said Friday.

Army troops caught up with about 20 New People's Army guerrillas sparking a firefight Wednesday that killed 10 rebels, including three commanders, near a village in Pantabangan town in Nueva Ecija province, the army said. Thirteen rifles and a pistol were recovered from the area of the fighting, which was near a key dam, it said. Troops were pursuing about 10 other guerrillas who withdrew from the remote area, regional Army Spokesperson Major Jimson Masangkay said by telephone. Brigadier general Norwin Joseph Pasamonte, an army infantry brigade commander, commended the troops but expressed sadness over the rebel deaths. "The government did not fail in appealing to them to surrender and return to normal life," Pasamonte said in a statement. *—AP*

Near miss for ship from suspected attack by Houthis

DUBAI, 28 JUNE

A ship travelling through the Red Sea came under repeated missile fire on Friday in a likely attack launched by Yemen's Houthi rebels, authorities said, the latest targeting the crucial maritime route.

Five missiles landed near the vessel as it travelled off the coast of the rebel-held port city of Hodeida in Yemen, the British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations centre said.

The missiles landed near the vessel, but caused no damage, the UKTMO added.

The Houthis did not immediately claim the attack. However, it can take them hours or even days before they acknowledge an assault.

The rebels have targeted more than 60 vessels by firing missiles and drones in their campaign that has killed a total of four sailors. They seized one vessel and sank two since November. A US-led airstrike campaign has targeted the Houthis since January, with a series of strikes on 30 May killing at least 16 people and wounding 42 others, the rebels say.

The Houthis maintain that their attacks target ships linked to Israel, the United States or Britain. However, many of the ships attacked have little or no connection to the Israel-Hamas war — including some bound for Iran. *—AP*

7.2 magnitude earthquake shakes Peru, 3 injured

LIMA, 28 JUNE

- The earthquake was felt in the nearby regions of Ayacucho, Ica, and the capital, local media reported

A magnitude 7.2 earthquake shook the southern coast of Peru early Friday. Authorities say three people injures in the earthquake.

The US Geological Survey said the earthquake occurred at 12.36 am. The epicentre was located in the Pacific Ocean, some 8kmwest of the district of Atiquipa, in the province of Caravelí. That is some 380 miles south of the capital, Lima, near the borders with Chile and Bolivia. The depth was 28km.

The earthquake was felt in the nearby regions of Ayacucho, Ica, and the capital, local media reported.

Eder Allca, the mayor of the district of Sancos, in the Ayacucho region, told the local radio station RPP that a road in his district suffered rock slides that left several localities cut off.

The Hydrography and Navigation Directorate of the Peruvian Navy reported that the seismic event generated a tsunami alert along the Peruvian coast. However, the Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre in Honolulu said any threat of a tsunami had already passed. *—AP*

BLACK MAGIC ON PREZ

Police arrests 2 Maldivian ministers

MALE, 28 JUNE

Maldives police have arrested two serving ministers for allegedly performing black magic on President Mohamed Muizzu, local media reported on Thursday.

Shamnaz Saleem, who was a state minister at the Environment Ministry, her ex-husband Adam Rameez, who was serving as a minister at the President's Office, and two others were arrested, local media said quoting the police, which, however, declined to share any information about the reasons or the alleged performance of black magic.

"Shamnaz, alongside two other individuals, was arrested on Sunday. All three of them have been remanded in custody for seven days. She was suspended from her post on Wednesday as per the Environment Ministry," news portal Sun.mv reported, adding, Rameez too has been suspended on Thursday.

Shamnaz Saleem, former state minister and her ex-husband Adam Rameez were arrested *PHOTO: X/@_MALDIVES*

Media reported that after Muizzu assumed office as the President in November last year, Shamnaz was appointed as a state minister first at Muliaage, the official residence of the president and then transferred to the Environment Ministry. *—AP*

Rupee rises 7 paise to close at 83.38 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 28 JUNE

The rupee appreciated 7 paise to settle at 83.38 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday backed by renewed foreign fund inflows. Forex traders said the strength of the American currency in the overseas market, elevated crude oil prices and US dollar demand from oil marketing companies capped sharp gains for the local unit. At the inter-bank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.42 and hit the intraday high of 83.36 and a low of 83.49 against the greenback during the session. It finally settled at 83.38 (provisional) against the dollar, registering a gain of 7 paise from its previous close. On Thursday, the rupee appreciated 12 paise to settle at 83.45 against the US dollar.

According to Anuj Choudhary – Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas, rupee gained to 83.3750 on boost from inclusion of Indian bonds in the JP Morgan's index. —*PTI*

Gold climbs ₹370; silver jumps ₹600 amid global cues

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

Gold prices climbed Rs 370 to Rs 72,550 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday amid a rise in precious metal rates internationally, according to HDFC Securities. The yellow metal prices had settled at Rs 72,180 per 10 grams on Thursday. Silver prices also jumped Rs 600 to Rs 91,200 per kg. It had closed at Rs 90,600 per kg in the previous session."In Delhi markets, spot gold prices (24 carats) are trading at Rs 72,550 per 10 grams, up by Rs 370 from the previous close," Saumil Gandhi, Research Analyst at HDFC Securities, said. In the overseas markets, spot gold at Comex was trading at USD 2,322 per ounce, up USD 17 from the previous close. Gold climbed for the first time in three days, boosted by recent US jobless data which suggested the US labour market was weakening from levels during the post-pandemic recovery—*PTI*

NHPC, ENGIE sign pacts for 2 solar projects in Gujarat

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

State-owned NHPC and energy solutions provider ENGIE on Friday announced signing of PPAs with Gujarat Urja Vikas Nigam Ltd (GUVNL) for two solar projects of 200 MW each. In a statement, NHPC said it has signed a power purchase agreement (PPA) with GUVNL for 200 MW capacity solar project within Gujarat State Electricity Corporation's renewable energy park at Khavda. "The estimated financial implication for the project would be Rs 846.66 crore. The scheduled completion period for the project is 15 months from the date of execution of PPA," it said. For ENGIE, this would be the fourth solar project in Gujarat, it said in a statement. "ENGIE signs PPA for 200 MW solar PV project. The bidding process by GUVNL took place on 25 February , 2024, with ENGIE securing 200 MW at a competitive tariff of Rs 2.62 per unit," it said.—*PTI*

Interest rates on small savings schemes to be same

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

The government on Friday left the interest rates on various small savings schemes unchanged for the quarter beginning July 1, 2024. "The rates of interest on various small savings schemes for the second quarter of FY 2024-25, starting from 1 July, 2024, and ending on September 30, 2024, shall remain unchanged from those notified for the first quarter (1 March, 2024, to 30 June, 2024) of FY 2024-25," said a finance ministry notification. As per the notification, deposits under the Sukanya Samriddhi scheme will attract an interest rate of 8.2 per cent, while the rate on a three-year term deposit remains at 7.1 per cent. The interest rates for popular PPF and post office savings deposits scheme too have been retained at 7.1 per cent and 4 per cent.—*PTI*

After Jio, Airtel hikes phone tariffs by 10-21 pc

It is the first major hike by the telecom industry

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

Bharti Airtel said it has maintained that the mobile Average Revenue Per User (ARPU) needs to be upwards of Rs 300 ***PHOTO: AGENCIES***

Bharti Airtel on Friday announced a 10-21 per cent hike in prepaid and postpaid mobile tariffs, a day after larger rival Reliance Jio announced an increase in rates.

The move assumes significance, as it marks the first major increase in tariffs by the telecom industry, in two-and-a-half years.

Airtel's tariff hike across various plans ranges from 10-21 per cent, and will be effective from 3 July.

While the rate of daily data add-on (1GB) will see an increase by Rs 3, rising from Rs 19 to Rs 22, in the case of 365-day validity plan offering 2GB/day, the increase works out to as high as Rs 600, as rates are set to rise from Rs 2,999, all the way to Rs 3,599.

In the unlimited voice plan category, tariff has been raised from Rs 179 to Rs 199, marking a Rs 20 increase in this 28-day validity plan that offers 2GB of data to users.

"We have ensured that there is a very modest price increase (less than 70 paise per day) on entry-level plans, in order to eliminate any burden on budget challenged consumers," Airtel said announcing revision in its mobile tariffs.

Bharti Airtel said it has maintained that the mobile Average Revenue Per User (ARPU) needs to be upwards of Rs 300, to enable a financially healthy business model for telcos in India."We believe that this level of ARPU will enable the substantial investments required in network technology and spectrum and offer a modest return on capital," the telco said.Airtel's move comes close on the heels of tariff hike announcement by Reliance Jio, and market watchers expect a similar tariff hike move from Vodafone Idea soon.

Jio, India's largest telecom operator, announced a 12-27 per cent hike in mobile tariffs on Thursday.

That said, a look at the tariff and rate hikes announced by the two telcos respectively, indicates that most of the Airtel mobile plans will still cost more than that of Reliance Jio.Airtel, in fact, has been strongly advocating the need for tariff hike in the industry, and has time-and-again flagged the 'absurdly low' levels of rates prevailing in India compared to other parts of the world. —*PTI*

NIFTY UP 103.75 POINTS

Sensex, Nifty hit new all-time high amid foreign fund inflows

MUMBAI, 28 JUNE

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty hit their new all-time high levels in early trade on Friday amid a rally in global markets, buying in Reliance Industries and fresh foreign fund inflows.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 308.49 points to hit a fresh record peak of 79,551.67. The Nifty climbed 103.75 points to hit a new lifetime high of 24,148.25.

Among the 30 Sensex companies, Sun Pharma, NTPC, Tech Mahindra, Reliance Industries, Tata Motors, Asian Paints, Tata Steel and Nestle were the biggest gainers.

Adani Ports, UltraTech Cement, IndusInd Bank and Maruti were among the laggards. "The market momentum has the potential to take the Sensex to 80,000 level. The healthy trend in the recent rally is that it is driven by fundamentally strong largecaps like RIL, Bharti and leading private sector banks," said VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 7,658.77 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.49 per cent to USD 86.81 a barrel.

The BSE benchmark jumped 568.93 points or 0.72 per cent to settle at a new closing peak of 79,243.18 on Thursday. The Nifty ended at a fresh record high of 24,044.50, rising 175.70 points or 0.74 per cent. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

- The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 308.49 points to hit a fresh record peak of 79,551.67. The Nifty climbed 103.75 points to hit a new lifetime high of 24,148.25.

Reliance's mcap tops ₹21L cr mark

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

Shares of Reliance Industries climbed over 2 per cent on Friday, taking its market valuation above the Rs 21 lakh crore mark. The heavyweight stock rose by 2.31 per cent to settle at Rs 3,131.85 apiece on the BSE. During the day, it jumped 3.27 per cent to hit a record high of Rs 3,161.45. It was the biggest gainer among the 30-share BSE Sensex firms. On the NSE, the stock climbed 2.19 per cent to settle at Rs 3,128.25 each. Its market valuation jumped to Rs 21,18,951.20 crore. —*PTI*

Sebi allows 100% aggregate contribution for NRIs

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

PHOTO: PTI

Markets regulator Sebi has allowed up to 100 per cent aggregate contribution by non-resident Indians, Overseas Citizens of India, Resident Indians in the corpus of FPIs that are based out of International Financial Services Centre (IFSC).

The move is expected to enhance investment by Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) in India.

In a circular issued on Thursday, Sebi said it has amended FPI rules to "provide flexibility of having up to 100 per cent aggregate contribution by non-resident Indians (NRIs), Overseas Citizens of India (OCIs) and Resident Indians (RI) Individuals in the corpus of FPIs based in IFSCs in India and regulated by International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA)".

Over the years, there has been a consistent demand to channel more NRI and OCI investments into the Indian securities markets by enabling greater participation of NRIs and OCIs in FPI corpuses.

In the July 2019 budget speech, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had also recognised that despite India being the world's top remittance recipient, NRI investment in Indian capital markets remains relatively low.

At the time of registration, an FPI applicant must submit a declaration to their DDP (Designated Depository Participant) stating its intent to have 50 per cent or more of their corpus contributed by NRIs, OCIs, and resident Indians, Sebi said.

Existing FPIs have six months from the date of the circular to submit this declaration.

The declaration can only be reviewed during the renewal of registration.

Applicants must provide their DDP with copies of the PAN cards of all NRI/OCI/RI individual contributors and detail their economic interest.

If a contributor lacks a PAN, the applicant must submit a declaration from NRIs/OCIs stating they have no PAN or taxable income in India. —*PTI*

FURNITURE FIRM'S RISE

The stock started the trade at Rs 499, reflecting a jump of 35.23 per cent on the BSE ***PHOTO: LOVESTANLEY.COM***

Stanley Lifestyles shares jump over 38 pc in debut trade

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

- The stock started the trade at Rs 499, reflecting a jump of 35.23 per cent on the BSE

Shares of luxury furniture brand Stanley Lifestyles Ltd listed with a premium of over 38 per cent on Friday, against the issue price of Rs 369.

The stock started the trade at Rs 499, reflecting a jump of 35.23 per cent on the BSE. Later, it soared 38.21 per cent to Rs 510.At the NSE, it listed at Rs 494.95, up 34.13 per cent.

The initial public offering (IPO) of Stanley Lifestyles got subscribed 96.98 times on the last day of subscription on Tuesday.

The Rs 537-crore initial share sale had a fresh issue of up to Rs 200 crore and an offer for sale of up to 91,33,454 equity shares.

The initial share-sale had a price range of Rs 351-369 per share. The net proceeds from the fresh issue to the tune of Rs 90.13 crore will be used by the company towards expenditure for opening new stores, Rs 39.99 crore expenditure for opening the anchor stores and Rs 10.04 crore expenditure for renovation of existing stores.

Funds to the tune of Rs 8.18 crore for funding the capital expenditure requirements for the purchase of new machinery and equipment by the company and its material subsidiary, SOSL (Stanley OEM Sofas Ltd) and for general corporate purposes.

Bengaluru-based Stanley Lifestyles is among the few Indian companies operating in various price categories, including super-premium, luxury, and ultra-luxury, through its multiple brands.

The company operates two manufacturing facilities in Bengaluru. —*PTI*

CCI TO MAKE CHANGES TO COMPETITION RULES

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

Fair trade regulator CCI will shortly come out with changes to certain competition rules, including those related to green channel approvals for mergers and acquisitions.

Speaking at a conference in the national capital, Competition Commission of India (CCI) Chairperson Ravneet Kaur on Friday said the regulator is focusing on advocacy efforts and capacity building.

While mentioning about various activities being done by the CCI, she said, "We are going to shortly notify changes in competition rules".

These include changes to rules pertaining to green channel approvals for mergers and acquisitions, and de minimas.

De minimas relates to exemption thresholds for mergers and acquisitions that need clearance from the CCI.

As part of boosting efforts to curb unfair business practices in the marketplace, amendments have also been made to the competition law.

Kaur flagged dark patterns in the e-commerce space and algorithmic collusion. —*PTI*

'Tech is a golden thread that binds enterprise'

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

Anand Mahindra ***PHOTO: PTI***

Technology is a golden thread binding an organisation's work to its future vision, and the power of artificial intelligence (AI) can strengthen this thread, said Tech Mahindra chairman Anand Mahindra.

Penning his thoughts in the annual report 2023-24 of IT services and consultation company Tech Mahindra, the billionaire businessman said it is impossible to talk about any business today without talking about technology.

"Technology is the Golden Thread that binds what an organisation is doing today with the future world it is trying to create. Across multi-business organisations, it enables synergy and creates unexpected business connections. Across industries, it creates collaboration and transformation," he wrote.

Mahindra, 69, said the future belongs to those who can creatively weave this Golden Thread into a value-enhancing business tapestry.

He said IT services will play a pivotal role in enhancing Golden Thread by integrating AI seamlessly into the core business functions.

"From extracting data-driven insights to solving industry-specific problems to revolutionising customer engagement, the synergy between IT and AI will enable a new era of technological prowess...

"...the future undoubtedly belongs to IT services that can increase the value of that Golden Thread from 18 carat to 24 carat with the power of AI," he said.

He said the winners will be companies that are agile, well-prepared and can "Scale at Speed" (a promise that Tech Mahindra has positioned itself on time and again). —*PTI*

With AI on the rise, RBI Guv calls for elimination of algorithm biases

MUMBAI, 28 JUNE

Shaktikanta Das ***PHOTO: PTI***

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das on Friday emphasised on the need to eliminate biases in algorithms as the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) is on the rise.

Delivering the inaugural address at the 18th Statistics Day Conference organised by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), he said the use of statistics has been ever growing as a preferred tool for drawing inferences in diverse fields and the discipline has moved beyond collection of facts to focusing more on interpretation and drawing inferences, taking into account the level of uncertainty.

This shift, Das said has allowed statistics to become an integral part of other major disciplines. The surge in computing power is being increasingly harnessed in combination with statistical methods to improve efficiency in decision making and enrich end-user experience in various fields of human knowledge.

"Looking ahead, the year 2025 has a special significance for compilation of official statistics the world over. Global efforts are expected to culminate in new global standards for compilation of macroeconomic statistics," he said, and added the team in the Reserve Bank is closely tracking these developments. —*PTI*

PLANT FEARS CLOSURE

Tata Steel UK starts legal war with union

LONDON, 28 JUNE

The Mumbai-headquartered steel major had originally planned to shut down one of the blast furnaces ***PHOTO: PTI***

Tata Steel on Friday said it is being forced to commence legal action to challenge the validity of a steelworkers' union strike ballot, as it warned that its blast furnaces at Port Talbot may have to pause operations amid the industrial action.

The Mumbai-headquartered steel major had originally planned to shut down one of the blast furnaces by the end of June and the second one by September.

However, Unite the Union's proposed strike from 8 July could result in the closure being forced earlier.

"Following the announcement by the Unite Union to unilaterally call strike action from 8 July, Tata Steel is unfortunately forced to commence legal action to challenge the validity of Unite's ballot," a Tata Steel spokesperson said.

"In the coming days, if we cannot be certain that we are able to continue to safely and stably operate our assets through the period of strike action, we will not have any choice but to pause or stop heavy end operations (including both blast furnaces) on the Port Talbot site. That is not a decision we would take lightly, and we recognise that it would prove extremely costly and disruptive throughout the supply chain, but the safety of people on or around our sites will always take priority over everything else," the spokesperson said.

The company again called for Unite to withdraw its industrial action and join the other unions – Community and GMB – in giving consideration to the company's proposed memorandum of understanding, which it said puts forward a wide-ranging proposal including "generous employee support packages, training, and skills development". —*PTI*

Ashok Leyland, Bajaj Finance tie up for vehicle finance

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

PHOTO: PTI

Commercial vehicle maker Ashok Leyland Ltd on Friday said it has partnered with Bajaj Finance for financial of vehicles across India.

The company has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Bajaj Finance, a part of Bajaj Finserv, for the purpose, Ashok Leyland said in a statement.

The partnership will enable both Ashok Leyland and Bajaj Finance to offer customised and seamless financial solutions to their customers, it added.

"This strategic partnership will strengthen Ashok Leyland's market position," Ashok Leyland CFO KM Balaji said.Bajaj Finance Deputy Managing Director, Anup Saha said, "We are confident that with Bajaj Finance's best-in-class India stack processes more vehicle owners will gain from this partnership and scale their operations."

The sales and marketing teams of the two companies will work together to develop joint marketing and financing programs, mutually enhancing business volumes under the partnership, the statement said. —*PTI*

AFTER 10 YEARS WAIT

Dominant India storms into T20 World Cup final

Don't want to jinx it but there's a big one coming up: Rohit

GEORGETOWN, 28 JUNE

An all-round India outplayed defending champions England in the second semi-final to secure a place in the T20 World Cup final for the first time in 10 years. The victory sets up a highly anticipated title clash with South Africa in Barbados on Saturday

Leading the charge once again was their inspirational skipper Rohit Sharma, who laid the foundation with an aggressive 57 off 39 balls, and the captain was well-supported by Suryakumar Yadav (47 off 36), as India posted 171 for seven after being asked to bat first in the rain-hit match.

On a slow, holding pitch with low bounce, left-arm Axar Patel (3/23) helped India tighten their grip on the match with his brilliant bowling, while his slow-bowling colleague Kuldeep Yadav (3/19) caused the damage in the middle overs.

The Indian team thus exacted revenge for the crushing 10-wicket loss it endured against the defending champions in the 2022 semifinal of the mega-event at the Adelaide Oval. In the process, Rohit became the first Indian captain to lead the country in three ICC global finals in a space of 12 months -- 2023 World Test Championship, 2023 ODI World Cup and now the T20 World Cup.

Team India reached the final of T20 World Cup 2024 PHOTO: X / @T20WORLDCUP

Axar Patel PHOTO: X / @T20WORLDCUP

Jos Buttler (23 off 15) and Harry Brook (25 off 19) were the only England batters to reach double figures, summing up India's dominance in the game. Both batters fell while attempting the reverse sweep against Axar and Kuldeep respectively.

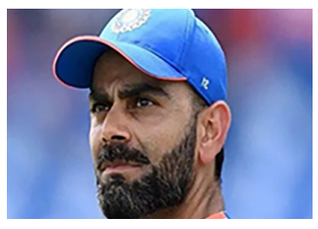
The keenly awaited fixture was impacted by intermittent rain with the start of play being delayed by one hour and 15 minutes. Another long halt came when India was 65 for two in eight overs.

Don't want to jinx it but there's a big one coming up: Rohit, Dravid back Kohli

India head coach Rahul Dravid and skipper Rohit Sharma have thrown their weight behind the struggling Virat Kohli, saying the stylish batter has shown the intent and is due for a "big one" in the T20 World Cup finals against South Africa.

Kohli, who was the highest run-getter at this year's IPL with 741 runs, is yet to make a significant contribution in the tournament, having scored only 75 runs in seven innings.

"You know with Virat, the thing is, when you play a slightly high-risk brand of cricket there can be times when it doesn't come off," Dravid said after India marched into the final with a



Virat Kohli PHOTO: PTI

68-run win over England in the semifinals here.

"Even today, I thought he hit a good six to set the tempo but he was just unlucky that the ball seemed a little bit more. But I love the intent, I love the way he went about doing it.

"And for some reason, I don't want to jinx it but I think there's a big one coming up. I'm just loving his attitude and that he's committing himself on the field - I think he deserves it."

Skipper Rohit also backed Kohli to come good in the final on Saturday.

"He's a quality player. Any player can go through that. But again, we do understand his class and we do understand his importance in all these big games.

India 171 for 7 (Rohit 57, Suryakumar 47, Jordan 3-37) beat England 103 (Brook 25, Kuldeep 3-19, Axar 3-23) by 68 runs.

—PTI

Rahul Dravid PHOTO: PTI

Don't want to win for anyone: Dravid rejects online trend

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

A stickler when it comes to keeping time, Rahul Dravid was once unusually late to a reading session at a bookstore in Bengaluru. But Dravid settled in the back row with other invitees for the entire duration of the event without any fuss.

He politely declined the organizers' request to move up the row. Dravid never really wished for the front seat or the glare of the world. It's just not his zone.

But on Saturday, irrespective of the outcome, the India head coach will have to stand in full view of the cricketing world when his side takes on South Africa in the T20 World Cup final at Bridgetown, Barbados.

The 51-year-old has already got a prelude to it as the host broadcasters are running a #DoItForDravid trend on social media.

But it is as un-Rahul Dravid as anything one can ever think of.

For Dravid, winning the World Cup is not a personal glory moment but he would certainly broaden it out to the team effort and to Rohit Sharma's inspired leadership.

The man himself made it clear, and the words reflected his sagacity.

"I just want to play good cricket and yeah, doing it for someone is totally against who I am as a person and what I believe in. So, I don't want to talk about it and discuss it," Dravid told Star Sports.

He was emphatic while slipping in a reminder about the ethos which he followed so diligently over the years.

"I don't believe in this 'Do it for somebody'. I love that quote about somebody asking somebody else, 'Why do you want to climb Mount Everest?' and he says 'I want to climb Mount Everest because it's there'.

—PTI

PHOTO: PTI

Javelin thrower DP Manu could be in dope net

PANCHKULA, 28 MAY

Javelin thrower DP Manu has been asked to stay away from competitions by the Athletics Federation of India on the instructions of the National Anti-Doping Agency as the Olympic hopeful is suspected to have been caught in the dope net. The 24-year-old Manu, who won a silver medal at the 2023 Asian Championships, was more or less certain to qualify for the Olympics through the world ranking quota but is set to miss the Paris bus after the latest development.*—PTI*

Uruguay routs Bolivia 5-0 at Copa America

EAST RUTHERFORD, 28 JUNE

Darwin Núñez scored in his seventh straight international match, and Uruguay routed Bolivia 5-0 on Thursday night to move to the verge of a quarterfinal berth in the Copa America.

Facundo Pellistri put the Uruguayans ahead in the eighth minute and Núñez doubled the lead in the 21st with his 10th goal in his last seven games for Uruguay and 13th in 25 matches overall.

Maximiliano Araújo scored his second goal of the tournament in the 77th, and Federico Valverde (81st) and Rodrigo Bentancur (89th) added goals as Uruguay romped through a ragged Bolivian defense.

Uruguay, seeking its record 16th Copa America title, is 2-0 for six points with a plus-seven goal difference and would advance with at least a draw on Monday against the U.S. at Kansas City, Missouri, or perhaps even a loss. The U.S. has three points and a plus-one goal difference and Panama has three points and a minus-one difference. *—AP*

Darwin Núñez PHOTO: PTI

Tvesa makes a solid start in Swiss Ladies Open

ROTKREUZ, 28 JUNE

India's Tvesa Malik got off to a solid start at the VP Bank Swiss Ladies Open as she carded 3-under 68 in the opening round of the Ladies European Tour event here.

Though the first round was far from complete, Tvesa, who is making a comeback from indifferent form, had four birdies and one bogey at Golfpark Holzhausern.

Among Indians in the fray, only Seher Atwal had finished at 6-over 77 while Vani Kapoor, Ridhima Dilawari and Amandeep Drall had just about started their rounds.

This week India's leading stars, Diksha Dagar and Pranavi Urs are taking a break.

—AP

India women's Shafali Verma celebrates her double century during a one-off test cricket match between India and South Africa, at the MA Chidambaram Stadium, in Chennai on Friday PHOTO: PTI

Shafali's record-breaking feat put India on top against SA

CHENNAI, 28 JUNE

Dashing India opener Shafali Verma smashed the fastest double-century in the history of women's Test cricket, eclipsing Annabel Sutherland of Australia during the one-off Test against South Africa here on Friday.

Shafali, 20, scored her double ton off just 194 balls, bettering Sutherland's feat, which came off 248 balls against South Africa earlier this year.

Shafali also became the second Indian after former skipper Mithali Raj to hit a double century in Test cricket after almost 22 long years. Mithali's 214 had come off 407 balls and the former India skipper had achieved it during the drawn second Test against England at Taunton in August 2002.

Shafali struck 23 fours and eight maximums during her attacking knock. She brought up her double-ton with consecutive sixes of off-spinner Delmi Tucker, followed by a single. Shafali was finally run out at 205 off 197 balls.

Asked if she knew what the highest individual score for India was in women's Tests, Shafali replied: "If I had known, I'd have tried to go higher (laughs).

Whatever was in my range, I wanted to hit it. Smriti (Mandhana) was also telling me to attack whenever I wanted and that helped."I always enjoy my range hitting and try and back my strengths. Smriti always tells me to follow my instincts, especially when playing against the spinners."Besides, her opening partner Mandhana also made an attacking 149 off 161 balls with the help of 27 boundaries and one six to stitch a formidable opening partnership of 292 runs, which came off in just 52 overs.

- Dashing India opener Shafali Verma smashed the fastest double-century in the history of women's Test cricket, eclipsing Annabel Sutherland of Australia during the one-off Test against South Africa here on Friday.

Jemimah, who appeared to be in good touch, brought up her third Test half-century shortly thereafter, before falling to Tucker, as India reached 450/4, a huge total by any yardstick. But there was more to come as skipper Harmanpreet Kaur (42 not out) and Richa Ghosh (43 not out) took charge. The pair helped India become the first team to cross the 500-run mark in a single day of a women's Test match. *—PTI*

EURO 2024

Germany prepares to face Denmark

DORTMUND, 28 JUNE

Euro 2024 hosts Germany come into Saturday's last 16 clash with Denmark in Dortmund hoping to have learned from Sunday's 1-1 draw with Switzerland, their final group stage match. After almost a decade of struggles at major tournaments, Germany was riding high after dominant wins over Scotland and Hungary to start the Euros. Germany however came crashing back down to earth against Switzerland and were on course for defeat, before Niclas Fuellkrug's stoppage-time header snatched a draw -- and with it, first place in the group.

It was a wake-up call the hosts needed, particularly with fans already eyeing a fourth Euros crown and a reminder that coach Julian Nagelsmann has plenty to work on. *—AP*

Germany's Niclas Fuellkrug celebrates happiness after the draw against Switzerland PHOTO: X / EUFA.COM

World Tennis League Season 3 to be held in Abu Dhabi

ABU DHABI, 28 JUNE

The third season of the World Tennis League (WTL) will be held from 19 to 22 December at the Etihad Arena here. The four-day event, in its previous season, featured global tennis icons like Daniil Medvedev, Stefanos Tsitsipas, Andrey Rublev, Aryna Sabalenka, Iga Swiatek and Elena Rybakina. The PBG Eagles, comprising Medvedev, Rublev, Mirra Andreeva, and Sofia Kenin, emerged as the champions of the WTL last year.*—AP*

Nagal gets tough draw in maiden Wimbledon main draw

LONDON, 28 JUNE

Sumit Nagal is set to face Serbia's Miomir Kecmanovic in his maiden main-draw match at Wimbledon, as per the draw announced on Friday. For the 26-year-old Nagal, this is the second straight Major where he has got direct entry into the main draw.

Nagal, the first Indian to appear in the main draw of men's singles since Prajnesh Gunneswaran in 2019, is in the same section of the draw as the top seed and World No. 1 Jannik Sinner and could face the Italian in the third round.

Olympic-bound Nagal and Kecmanovic, who is World No. 53, have met each other once - in the opening round of an ATP 250 event in Cologne four years ago where the Serbian won 4-6, 7-6(4), 6-1.

Sumit Nagal PHOTO: PTI

Nagal's sole appearance in men's singles at Wimbledon came in 2018 where he lost to Poland's Kamil Majchrzak in the first round of qualifying. The Indian had won the Boys' Doubles title at Junior Wimbledon in 2015, partnering Vietnam's Lý Hoàng Nam. *—AP*

UK-INDIA AWARDS 2024

Bindra and Malik honoured

LONDON, 28 JUNE

India's first individual gold medallist, Abhinav Bindra, and Paralympian Deepa Malikhave been honoured with Special Recognition Awards at a ceremony celebratingIndians who have made a significant impact globally.

India Global Forum's (IGF) annual UK-India Awards 2024 at Fairmont Windsor Park, near London, on Thursday evening, honoured the sporting legends alongside a 'Global Indian Icon Award'for social crusader Arunachalam Muruganantham, in recognition of hisrevolutionary work in menstrual hygiene captured in the 2018 Akshay Kumar film'Pad Man'.

Lord Anthony Bamford, founderof multinational construction giant JCB, was honoured with the LifetimeContribution to UK-India Relations."For a global sport like theOlympics, it makes complete sense to have a closer relationship with theworld's largest population.

Every fourth or fifth person in the world is inIndia, so there's a lot of synergy there," said Bindra, on India potentiallyhosting the Olympics during a discussion around the future of sport in thecountry."But more thaninfrastructure, I think what we need is a vision that transcends farbeyond the sporting events itself. The Olympics, whenever held in India, has to be seen as a catalyst for change. *—PTI*

India's first individual gold medallist, Abhinav Bindra PHOTO: PTI

Pahal steals show with her sheer pace to win gold

PANCHKULA, 28 JUNE

Olympic-bound Kiran Pahal of Haryana once again stole the limelight with her sheer pace as she won the women's 400m race gold in 50.92 seconds the same time with which she had qualified for the Paris Games in the semifinals on the second day of the National Inter-State Athletics Championships here on Friday.

Kiran had surprised one and all as she breached the Olympic qualifying time of 50.95 seconds, clocking 50.92 seconds during the semifinals on Thursday.

On Friday, she led throughout the race and left second-placed Deepanshi (52.01), also from Haryana, at least five meters behind.Andhra Pradesh's Jyothika Sri Danda, a key member of the women's 4x400m relay team that booked a Paris Games berth last month, was third in 52.11. Promising middle-distance runner Parvej Khan of Haryana, who earlier this year became the first Indian to qualify for the final of a track event in the NCAA Championships of the United States, also lived up to the expectations as he won the men's 1500m gold with a time of 3 minutes 42.95 seconds. *—PTI*

Kiran Pahal PHOTO: PTI